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EX LIBRIS PROVINCIAE
PRO STUDIO THEOL.
S.S. CORDIS JESU.

"If any one love Me, he will keep My word, and My Father will love him, and We will come to him, and will make Our abode with him." (John XIV, 23.)

THE COMMANDMENTS EXPLAINED

ACCORDING TO THE MUNICH
OR PSYCHOLOGICAL METHOD

FOR CHILDREN OF THE
INTERMEDIATE AND HIGHER GRADES

BASED ON THE BALTIMORE
CATECHISM (No. 2)

WITHDRAWN

AN AID TO CATECHISTS

THIRD EDITION

BY

REV. JOSEPH J. BAIERL, S. T. D.

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PREFACE

This volume of catechetical instructions on Catholic moral teaching is intended to supplement our volume entitled *"The Creed Explained."* It embraces the entire second general division of the Catechism: the doctrine of the Commandments of God and the Church, the doctrine of sin and virtue. This doctrinal subject matter is indeed assigned to different classes in the various dioceses of our country; and since we have no uniform and standard program of studies in matters catechetical, this diversity could not be taken into consideration in the preparation of these instructions, for otherwise one would have to be satisfied with a mere commentary. However, in general it might be said, that these catechetical aids are meant for children, who are studying the Baltimore Catechism (No. 2) for the first time; hence for children of the intermediate and higher grades of our schools. They are for the most part an adaptation of the splendid work of Dr. H. Stieglitz: *"Ausgeführte Katechesen über die katholische Sittenlehre"* (6' ed., Jos. Kösel, Kempten & Munich, 1912). Dr. Stieglitz, unquestionably one of the foremost catechists of modern times, in a personal letter to the author expressed his satisfaction over the fact, "that my efforts for the promotion of catechetical instruction and training have begun to strike roots even in America for the honor of God and the salvation of the souls of children."[1]

The method according to which these instructions have been arranged is the so-called *Psychological* or *Munich Method* of catechization. "The method is called *psychological,* because it adapts the learning process, which is natural and spontaneous, to the teaching of

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[1]For an appreciation of the late Dr. Stieglitz's life and activity cf. Dr. Göttler's article: *"Dr. Henrich Stieglitz: Seine persönliche und literarische Lebensarbeit"*, Katechetische Blätter, Heft. 3, 4, u. 5, März-Mai 1920 (Jos. Kösel, Kempten & Munich).

religious truths. It demands in the first place that each lesson shall constitute a *catechetical unit*, namely coordination of the essentially related questions and answers, and such as can be brought under the light of a single story or illustration. In the second place, that the several stages of the learning process be pursued. There are three: presentation, explanation, application. In the third place, that the three adjunct, though non-essential, stages be utilized; namely, preparation, aim, synthesis. The children are first *prepared* by connecting the question with the actual contents of their minds (apperception). In the second place the teacher announces the *aim* he has in view. This in the third place is illustrated by a story. The various points of the story in their bearing on the aim are then *explained*. These several points are next summed up in a *synthesis*. Lastly, the *application* is made to the child's actual life and conduct. Such is the method in a nutshell. That it is soundly psychological is at once apparent. Beginning with *apprehension* (presentation, apperception), it passes through *understanding* (explanation) and *reasoning* to a *synthetic* grasp of the truth in question. The central truth being now thoroughly possessed by the children, the meaning of it for actual life is finally impressed on their minds. Theory and practice, thought and action, are thus happily conjoined and the child is taught *to learn to live*, the final end of all true education. Doubtless to some teachers the method will at first appear somewhat mechanical as well as cumbersome. However, *usus te plura docebit*. Let it be employed for a time; the mechanism will gradually put on the life of the spirit. Its weight will disappear under the agile muscles of the mind and tongue. Moreover, the dividing lines of the several stages will presently shade away into the continuity of the teaching process, which seeks unity as the result of the learning process."[2] For a

[2] *The American Ecclesiastical Review*, Philadelphia, Pa.; vol. LXI, No. 4, Oct., 1919, p. 463 sq.

more detailed account of this method the reader is referred to the Preface of our volume on *"The Creed Explained."*

Exception might indeed be taken by some to the length of the individual lessons of this series. However, it must be remembered that the conditions relative to the quantity and the time-period of the classes in religion are not the same everywhere. In good schools these instructions can be easily mastered, as experience testifies. It does not seem advisable, then, to limit oneself to the absolute minimum in the elaboration of catechetical aids. Whoever finds the subject matter too profuse may, therefore, shorten and select according to his own good judgment.

We subjoin a brief *Bibliography* of useful reference books for the catechist. Koch-Preuss: *A Handbook of Moral Theology,* especially vols. II, III, IV, V (B. Herder Book Co., St. Louis, Mo. 1918); A. Divine: *The Commandments Explained* (R. & T. Washbourne, London, 1912); F. Spirago & R. Clarke S. J.: *The Catechism Explained* (Benziger Bros., N. Y.); F. Spirago & J. Baxter: *Anecdotes and Examples Illustrating the Catholic Catechism* (Benziger Bros., N. Y.); P. Power: *Catechism, Doctrinal, Moral, Historical, Liturgical* (J. Duffy Co., Dublin); Thos. L. Kinkead: *An Explanation of the Baltimore Catechism* (Benziger Bros., N. Y.); W. Faerber & F. Girardy C. SS. R.: *Commentary on the Catechism* (B. Herder Book Co., St. Louis, Mo., 1906); Geo. Howe: *The Catechist,* vols. I and II (R. & T. Washbourne, London, 1898); D. Chisholm: *The Catechism in Examples,* vols. II, III, V (R. & T. Washbourne, London, 1908); J. G. Wenham: *The Catechumen* (St. Anselm's Society, London, 1892); *Catechism of the Council of Trent,* trans. into English by Very Rev. J. Donovan, D. D. (Jas. Duffy & Co., Dublin); Dr. M. Gatterer, S. J. and Dr. F. Krus, S. J.: *Die Erziehung zur Keuschheit* (trans. into English by C. Van Der Donckt: *Educating to Purity* (F. Pustet & Co., N. Y., 1916); Dr. A. Weber:

Ausgeführte Katechesen über die Gebote Gottes (Jos. Kösel, Kempten & Munich, 1904); C. Muff, O. S. B.: *Katechesen für die vier obern Klassen der Primarschule* (Benziger Bros., N. Y., 1910); Dr. Jos. Schmitt: *Erklärungen des mittleren Deharbschen Katechismus* (10' ed., B. Herder Book Co., St. Louis, Mo.); Dr. R. Baumeister: *Katechesen über den mittleren Katechismus* (B. Herder Book Co., St. Louis, Mo., 1904); Fr. W. Förster: *Jugendlehre* (G. Reimer, Berlin, 1912); L. Mehler: *Beispiele* (10' ed., G. Manz, Ratisbon); Katechetische Blätter, *passim*.

For the honor and glory of God! For the instruction and education of His children!

THE AUTHOR.

Feast of St. John Baptist de la Salle, 1920,
Rochester, N. Y.

PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION

The gracious reception accorded the first edition of *"The Commandments Explained"* has encouraged us to publish a new edition. The text remains substantially the same with the exception of Lesson X on Idolatry and False Worship, which we have illustrated by a story drawn from scenes more familiar to American children.

May this new edition continue to extend a helping hand to the great host of noble catechists!

THE AUTHOR.

Feast of St. Matthew, 1925,
Rochester, N. Y.

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I.

THE COMMANDMENTS OF GOD

LESSON I.

The Love of God.

Catechetical Unit:

1) Which are the Commandments that contain the whole law of God? L. XXIX, Q. 311 (first half).

2) What is Charity? L. X, Q. 109 (first half).

Preparation. Dear children, there is one resolution which all of you undoubtedly have made time and again: I am firmly determined to get to Heaven no matter what the cost; for nothing is too hard for Heaven. May you never forget that important resolution to your last breath! But how does one get to Heaven?—That too is what a certain rich young man wanted to know. And how did he ask that question of Jesus?—The Lord said to him: "If thou wilt enter into life, keep the Commandments" (Matt. xix, 17). Consequently the way to Heaven is this: *Keep the Commandments!* But which Commandments must a Christian observe?—The Commandments of God and of the Church. Tell me briefly the contents of the first three Commandments of God—*Love God!* Express in a few words the contents of the other seven Commandments of God—*Love thy neighbor!*

Yes, the love of God and the love of one's neighbor form the very kernel and marrow of the Christian life. Our holy Church is rich in saints and heroes of the love of God and the love of one's neighbor. Today St. Paul shall be our model. In the next class we shall consider the second great Commandment—the love of our neighbor.

Aim. Let us learn from St. Paul *how we ought to love God with our whole heart—above all things.* To love God—that is to be our happiness some day in Heaven. To love God more and more—that is our duty now in this present life.

Presentation. At one time Paul used to be called Saul. He burned with hatred against the Christians. But after his conversion he became a zealous Apostle of Christ. Indeed, the zeal and fervor of God's holy cause drove him from home. He left everything and lived and labored henceforth solely for the kingdom of God. Nothing was able to deter him from doing God's work. I am going to relate only a few of the many sufferings and battles of this great Apostle.

In the course of a third missionary journey Paul came into the city of Ephesus. Here he remained for more than two years. He was tireless in preaching and praying and doing penance. Day and night he preached the doctrine of Christ Crucified fearlessly in the houses and in the synagogues. God also gave him the power of working miracles. Therefore the harvest was rich and blessed. Hundreds of Jews and pagans became Christians. Of course, that excited the furious hatred of the heathen priests and idolaters. However, God protected Paul and no evil befell him.

It is hard to believe what this great Apostle of the Lord suffered for Christ and the Holy Faith. He himself gives us an account of all that he had to endure. This is what he says: "Of the Jews five times did I receive forty stripes, save one (that is, on five occasions I received thirty-nine strokes with whips) ; three times was I beaten with rods (by the pagan Romans) ; once was I stoned; three times I suffered shipwreck; a day and a night I was in the depth of the sea. In journeyings often, in perils (dangers) of water, in perils of robbers, in perils from my own brethren, in perils from the Gentiles, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils from false brethren. In labors and painfulness, in much

watchings, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness. Besides those things which are without: my daily instance, the solicitude (care) for all the churches" (II Cor. xi, 24s.)—There you have a picture of the labors and sufferings and battles of the great Apostle of the Gentiles.

Explanation. 1. Now tell me: Why did St. Paul labor so unceasingly and suffer so dreadfully?—He himself once told us the reason: "The charity (or love) of Christ presseth us" (II Cor. v, 14). But the charity or love of Christ is the charity or love of God. Do you see? The Apostle left everything: father and mother, home and possessions; he renounced the happiness and the good things of this earth. All his thoughts and labors were directed to God alone. He really gave himself entirely to God with all his mind and heart and strength; in fact, he finally gave up his very life for the love of God. You see, then, St. Paul loved God with his whole heart, with his whole soul, with all his strength and with his whole mind.—To be sure, that did not please his old friends, the Pharisees, and they became his most bitter enemies. But St. Paul no longer wanted to please men; he desired to please God alone. That is the first and the greatest Commandment of the law. Our Catechism says: **The first of the Commandments which contain the whole law of God is this: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, with thy whole soul, with thy whole strength and with thy whole mind."** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard; see the diagram below just above the synthesis).*

A good child surely loves its mother with all its heart. The mother is everything to the child; the child's heart belongs entirely to the mother's heart. So it was with St. Paul: his whole heart and soul, all his strength and mind belonged entirely to God. Therefore he once said so beautifully: "For to me, to live is Christ: and to die is gain" (Phil. i, 21). He meant to say: Christ is the end and the purpose of my life: to have Christ is to have life; to lose Christ is to lose my

very life. By death I shall become even more closely united with Christ.

2. a) But whence did St. Paul all of a sudden obtain this burning love of Christ?—It was a gift, a grace of God. You know how once a mysterious light shone all around St. Paul, when he was on the way to Damascus. At that moment the Holy Ghost enkindled the fire of charity or love in his heart. Charity is, then, a gift of God, *a Divine virtue,* by which it becomes easy for us to love God. Our Catechism says: **Charity is a Divine virtue by which we love God.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).* No one can give charity to himself. The Holy Ghost must give it to him. And when charity or love of God reigns in the heart, then God Himself dwells there as in a little kingdom of Heaven. Yes, just as the branch is united with the vine, so by charity the soul is united most intimately with God. By charity we are able to pray: "O God! Thou art mine, and I am Thine!" What a wonderful thing charity is!

b) Let us now look a little more deeply into St. Paul's heart. Why did he love God so warmly?—

Ever since the first rays of God's grace fell into Paul's soul, it grew bright in his heart and he saw clearly how great, how beautiful, how good and holy God is. Afterwards the Apostle was caught up into Heaven. He was permitted to see God in all His heavenly glory. That sight made him speechless with wonder, so that he could not describe what he saw. He could only say: "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man, what things God hath prepared for them that love Him" (I Cor. ii, 9). From that hour all earthly joys were distasteful to Paul. He had only one desire—to die so that he might see God and love Him forever. He himself once said: "I have a desire to be dissolved and to be with Christ" (Phil. i, 23). Therefore he no longer thought much of all the sufferings and battles of life. Yes, the more he had to suffer, the more did he rejoice,

for to suffer out of love is sweet and easy.—Now you can easily understand, why St. Paul had such burning love of God. He saw clearly that God is the highest and the most perfect good. Consequently he loved God with all the fervor of his soul; he loved God *"for His own sake."* St. Paul had true charity. **Charity is a Divine virtue by which we love God for His own sake.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

c) But how did St. Paul show his love for God?—He left all things for God's sake, for God was dearer to him than everything else in the world. Yes, if some one had offered him the crown of a king as a reward for one single sin, would St. Paul have made the exchange?—No, surely he would have said in holy anger: "Depart from me, thou wicked tempter. Neither death nor life shall separate me from the love of God. (Rom. vii, 39). Even though I owned all the riches of the world, what could they amount to, if I were to lose the highest good, my God, from out of my heart." —Yes, dear children, God was dearer to St. Paul than his very life. This great Saint loved God *"above all things."* He showed it, too, for he gladly went to death for the love of God. Do you see? That is true charity or love of God—to hate sin above all things, to prefer to give up everything, yes, to die rather than to sin. **Charity is a Divine virtue by which we love God above all things for His own sake.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

Here is a child that prays each day with its lips and its tongue: "O my God! I love Thee with my whole heart and above all things." Is that enough for true charity?—Far from it! Here is a child, that says to its parents: "Father, mother, how I love you!" But that child does not obey its parents and gives them much worry and very little joy. What will the parents say to that?—"If you really love us, show it by obeying us!" So it is in regard to God. Whoever loves God with all his heart, will obey Him, for that is pleasing to God. Christ Himself once said: "If you love Me keep My

Commandments" (John xiv, 15). That is what St. Paul did. He showed his charity or love of God by his deeds and did not depart from God's law a finger's breadth. That is true charity or love of God. Yes, he who really is in earnest in regard to his love of God must be able to say in all sincerity: "O God! what Thou wilt, I also will; what is pleasing to Thee, is also pleasing to me; what is displeasing to Thee, is also displeasing to me." Remember, therefore, that *we must show our charity for God by keeping God's Commandments.* Then we really love God above all things.

Write on the blackboard:

1. The first and greatest Commandment—to love God with thy whole heart, soul, strength, mind.
2. Charity—a gift of God (Divine virtue)—by which we love God—"for His own sake"—"above all things."

Synthesis. St. Paul was a hero of the love of God. Let us always keep in mind what we have learned today from his example. What is the first and the greatest Commandment of the law? Can we love God by our own strength alone as we should? Who helps us to love God as we should love Him? What then is charity? Why should we love God? How ought we to love God? How do we prove that we really love God? "If you love Me keep My Commandments," says Christ. *(Have the pupils read the answers from the Catechism. Assign the lesson for the next class).*

Application. 1. Bible History contains many shining examples of men and women and children, who showed that they understood the meaning of the first and the greatest Commandment.—*Abraham* preferred to give up his own son rather than to disobey God by sin. That is real charity of God; to prefer to lose everything rather than to be separated from God by sin. *Joseph of Egypt* preferred to go to prison rather than to commit a wicked sin. In the midst of the sinful temptation he said: "How can I do this wicked thing and sin against my God?" (Gen. xxxix, 9). *Susanna*

said to the men, who tempted her: "It is better for me to fall into your hands without sin, than to sin in the sight of the Lord" (Daniel xiii, 23). *Peter* wept bitterly over his sin. A man does not weep so easily. He wept because the holy fire of charity or the love of God burned so strongly in his heart. *Thousands of martyrs* gave up everything, even their life, for the love of God. For instance, *St. Ignatius,* Bishop of Antioch, and a pupil of St. John, the Apostle, gives us a beautiful example of true charity. He was condemned to death, because he professed publicly that he was a Christian. Joyfully he went forth to martyrdom. Although he was over eighty years old, he willingly undertook the difficult journey from Antioch to Rome, a journey of over four hundred miles. Before he was exposed to the wild beasts in the circus of Rome, he had to submit to various tortures of the most cruel kind. His torturers wanted to make him sacrifice to the idols. The pagan judge gave the command: "Force him to open his hands and fill them with fire; make him walk with bare feet over red-hot coals; open his mouth and pour in boiling water! We shall see whether we cannot extinguish in him this love for God!" But Ignatius replied calmly and firmly: "Neither burning fire, nor boiling water will ever be able to put out the fire of the charity of God in my heart!" And so it was; his love for God was strong. He died a martyr of Divine Charity. *St. Blanche* once said to her little son, Louis: "My child, you know that I love you with all my heart. But I would prefer to see you dead at my feet rather than know that you should ever commit a single mortal sin." That is charity; that Divine grace by which we love God with our whole heart, and soul, and strength and mind.

2. *Charity is a Divine virtue.*—St. Paul received Divine Charity in a wonderful manner. When did he obtain this gift?—At Baptism the Holy Ghost enkindled the fire of the love of God in your hearts. St. Paul wrote to the Christians at Rome: "The charity of God

is poured forth in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, Who is given to us" (Rom. v, 5). To be sure, at that time charity was only like a little flame. But it ought to become a bright shining flame of fire. How can that happen?—You ought to make acts of charity often and pray: "O my God! I love Thee with my whole heart and above all things. O my God! let me rather die than sin."—This fire of the love of God can also grow less and less.—That happens by every venial sin. Yes, charity can even be extinguished entirely.—A mortal sin—and charity is put out, the sanctuary of the soul is desecrated and laid waste, and the Holy Ghost leaves your soul in sorrow. Therefore St. Paul once warned the Christians of his day: "Extinguish not the Spirit" (I Thess. v, 19).

3. *Now just one more question of conscience!*—Imagine, children, that not I but God is standing before you. He looks into the very depths of your heart and asks you with holy earnestness: "Child, do you love Me?" Dare you say: "My God! Thou knowest that I love Thee!" Would not many of you have to fear at this question?

Just listen to how a person feels, who really loves God above all things. His first thought in the morning belongs to the good God. He offers Him the entire day and prays at once: "My God and my Lord! All for Thy honor!" Yes, the thought of God accompanies him the whole day through like a Guardian Angel and often admonishes him: "All for God!" If a temptation to sin arises, at once he thinks of God and says: "Rather die than sin!" And if some one were to say to him: "See, I will give you this shining gold coin, if you commit this sin," in anger and indignation he would reply: "Keep your filthy, sinful money! My God is dearer to me." And if he goes out for a walk and sees the sweet smelling flowers and the trees and bushes in bloom, and high in the heavens the glorious sun, and if he hears the singing birds and the buzzing insects and the murmuring brook, he feels joy in his

heart; yes, it seems to him as if all things are calling out to him: Love God! And finally when evening comes, and tired with the labors of the day he betakes himself to rest, his last greeting belongs to God. Have you such a love in your hearts? As great as is your charity for God now, so great some day will your reward be in Heaven. Let us say again together: "O my God! I love Thee above all things. O my God! let me rather die than sin. O my God! increase my love."

LESSON II.

The Love of One's Neighbor.

Catechetical Unit:

1) Which are the Commandments that contain the whole law of God? L. XXIX, Q. 311 (second half).

2) What is Charity? L. X, Q. 109 (second half).

3) Why do these two Commandments of the love of God and of our neighbor contain the whole law of God? L. XXIX, Q. 312.

Preparation. Dear children, a bird needs two wings to raise itself in the air. The soul, too, needs two wings to enable it to raise itself some day to God in Heaven. These two wings are: the love of God and the love of one's neighbor. You already know the love of God. Let us first review the chief points. *(Question the pupils briefly on the foregoing lesson).*

Love God above all things! That is the first duty of a Christian. Christ Himself has said so: "This is the greatest and the first Commandment" (Matt. xxii, 38). But that is not yet all. *Love thy neighbor as thyself!* That is the second part of the great Commandment. But what does that mean?—That is perhaps not entirely clear to you. Thus it was too with a certain lawyer. He asked Jesus: "Master, what must I do to possess eternal life?" Jesus said to him: "What is written in

the law? How readest thou?" He answered: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind, and thy neighbor as thyself" (Luke x, 27). Jesus said to him: "Thou hast answered right; this do, and thou shalt live." But the lawyer wishing to justify himself, said to Jesus: "And who is my neighbor?" Jesus answering related the parable of the Good Samaritan.

Aim. I shall first relate to you this glorious parable. From it you will see clearly: 1) *Who our neighbor is* and 2) *How we ought to love our neighbor.*

Presentation. A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among the robbers, who also stripped him, and having wounded him, went away leaving him half-dead. And it chanced, that a certain priest went down the same way: and seeing the wounded man, passed him by. In like manner also a levite, when he was near the place and saw him, passed by. But a certain Samaritan, being on his journey, came near him: and seeing him was moved with compassion. And going up to him, bound up his wounds, pouring in wine and oil; and setting him upon his beast, brought him to an inn, and took care of him. And the next day he took out two pence, and gave to the host, and said: "Take care of him; and whatsoever thou shalt spend over and above, I at my return will repay thee."

Then Jesus asked the lawyer: "Which of these two in thy opinion was neighbor to him that fell among the robbers?" But the lawyer answered: "He that showed mercy to him." Then Jesus said to him: "Go and do thou in like manner" (Luke x, 30s). *(Show the children a large picture of this scene).*

Explanation. This parable is very instructive. The lawyer wanted to know: "Who is my neighbor?" What answer did Jesus give him?—Now let us look a little more carefully at this parable.

1. Just picture to yourselves, dear children, this poor unfortunate man, that fell among the robbers. In misery and helplessness he lies there in his blood by the wayside. Who could remain cold and without pity at such a sight? Only one who had a heart of stone. Then a priest happens along. He stops, looks at the poor man, and thinks to himself: "Of what concern is that stranger to me? I do not know him." And he continues his journey.—Immediately afterwards a levite approaches. He sees the wounded man. But he does not feel the slightest spark of love; on the contrary he says to himself: "He is a stranger. Why should I tarry here any longer? Perhaps in the end the same thing will happen to me. I am going to hurry on."—Finally a Samaritan comes along. Is he, too, so heartless?—No, he does not waste much time in asking: "Who is this man? Is he rich? If I help him, what will he give me?"—No, indeed: for scarcely does he see the poor man, when his heart is touched with sympathy for him. Lovingly he assists him as though he were his best friend, or his very brother. How do you like this act?—The Saviour, too, was pleased with this generosity. Therefore He said to the lawyer: "Go, and do thou in like manner."

Do you now know who is our neighbor?—*All men without exception.* We all are brothers and sisters. We may not ask, whether a person is a countryman of ours or a stranger, whether he is an American or a Spaniard, whether he is poor or rich, a Catholic or a Protestant, a Jew or a heathen, a friend or an enemy. We may not exclude anyone from our charity or love; we must open our hearts to all men. Yes, we are in conscience obliged to treat all men just as we should like other men to treat us. We must practice the Golden Rule, for Christ Himself has said: "As you would that men should do to you, do you also to them in like manner" (Luke vi, 31). That is the second of the two Commandments that contain the whole law of God. **The second of the Commandments that contain the whole law of God is this: "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as**

thyself." *(Repeat together; use the blackboard; see the diagram below just above the synthesis).*—Of course not every man is related to us in exactly the same close way. We may and ought to love our parents, our brothers and sisters, our friends more than other people.

You see, then, that there are two Commandments, which contain the whole law of God: the love of God and the love of our neighbor. Let us repeat the whole answer as it is in the Catechism: **The Commandments which contain the whole law of God are these two: 1st, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, with thy whole soul, with thy whole strength, and with thy whole mind; 2nd, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself."**

2. a) *But why should we love all men?*—God wills it. Christ taught us this duty. His *word* is enough for us Christians. "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself!" He most earnestly recommended to His disciples the duty of love for one's neighbor: "A new Commandment I give unto you: That you love one another, as I have loved you, that you also love one another" (John xiii, 34). And again He says: "This is My Commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you" (John xv, 12).

But Jesus taught us charity for our neighbor, not only by His word, but also by His *example.* There was a time when we all were in the greatest misery. Our souls were wounded unto death by sin. We all most surely would have perished. But then Jesus as the Good Samaritan came down from Heaven. Lovingly He poured heavenly oil into our deadly wounds—His Most Precious Blood. So great is His love for us poor mortals! And how beautiful it is to read how the Saviour wandered about the Holy Land, everywhere helping and healing and bestowing deeds of mercy and of love. Yes, He delighted in showing love and kindness to all the sick and in calling the naked and the poor His dear brothers.—*We should love our neighbor*

as ourselves, because Christ Himself has taught us so by His word and example. That is the first and the chief reason. But we have other reasons too.

b) Let us ask the Good Samaritan why he took pity on that unfortunate man. Most likely he thought to himself: I do not even know this man; still he is my brother. Why! have we not all one Father in Heaven? *We are all children of God.* Therefore, I may not let this poor man lie here in misery; I must help him; for whoever despises a child of God, despises also the Father in Heaven. Do you see?—*We should love our neighbor as ourselves, because every man is a child of God.*

c) But I have a doubt in my mind: What if that wounded man happened to be a wicked person? Would not the Samaritan have been allowed to think to himself: It really does not matter, if he does perish?—No, indeed; we may not think or speak like that; for every man, even the greatest sinner, has a great dignity. In the soul of every man there is *the image and likeness of God.* This image and likeness a person can, indeed, soil with the detestable filth of sin; but he can also cleanse that soul again. How can that be done?—Then perhaps that soul will be even more beautiful than your own soul. Yes, for the greatest sinner can be changed into a Saint. Just think of the Good Thief, Magdalen, Augustine!—*We should love our neighbor as ourselves, because every man is the image and likeness of God.*

d) We Christians have another reason for loving all men. Just look at Jesus on the Cross. There He hangs with outstretched arms. It is as though He wished to say: "All ye children of men, come to My Divine and loving Heart! I die, in order to save you." Yes, all of us together have been saved by Christ's sufferings and death; with His Blood He has redeemed us from Hell and bought us for Heaven.—*Every man has been saved in Christ.* Every man is a child of the Suffering Christ; therefore we may not despise anyone; we must love all

men. Every soul, even that of the biggest sinner, has an infinite value. To every soul, as it were, there clings a drop of the Precious Blood of Jesus Christ.

You see for yourselves, then, it is God's will, that we all should love one another as children of a great family.—*We ought to love our neighbor as ourselves: 1) because Christ Himself has taught us so by His word and example; 2) because every man is a child of God, the image and likeness of God, and like ourselves has been redeemed in Christ. (Repeat together).*

Now, dear children, if we do that, we please the Sacred Heart of Jesus. We have true Charity for our neighbor. We love our neighbor to please God, for God's sake, *"for the love of God."*

But I am quite sure, that it was not an easy matter for the Good Samaritan to be loving and kind to that poor man, who fell among the robbers. The Jews and the Samaritans, although neighbors, were enemies to one another. They would not have anything to do with one another. And yet, the Samaritan did a work of mercy to that unfortunate Jew. I wonder what it was that moved him to assist that wounded Jew?—It was the thought: "God wills it! I must do it to please Him." The Holy Ghost opened the eyes of the Good Samaritan to see God's will; and the Holy Ghost helped him to perform that deed of mercy. God Himself set that Good Samaritan's heart afire with love for his neighbor. Of himself that good man could not have loved that stranger, yes, his enemy, as he ought. God put charity into his heart. It is a gift of God, *a Divine virtue.* Our Catechism says: **Christ is a Divine virtue, by which we love our neighbor as ourselves for the love of God.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

When you were baptized, the Holy Ghost placed this Divine virtue of Charity in your heart. Therefore, it is easy for you to love your neighbor as yourselves for the love of God; it is easy for you to be kind and loving towards all men without exception. What a wonderful

gift this heavenly virtue is! It helps you to extend a helping hand to all men for God's sake. It turns your eyes away from earth and directs them upwards to God and to Heaven. It enables you to recognize in all men, even in your most bitter enemy, a child of God, who is made in the image and likeness of God and redeemed in Jesus' Most Precious Blood.

Love God above all things! Love your neighbor as yourselves for the love of God! That is the great Commandment, which Jesus imposes on all men without exception. And Charity enables us to fulfil that duty. Let us repeat together the whole answer of the Catechism: **Charity is a Divine virtue, by which we love God above all things for His own sake, and our neighbor as ourselves for the love of God.**

3. a) In the last lesson St. Paul gave us an example of the great Commandment of the love of God. Today's lesson of the Good Samaritan shows us how to fulfil the Commandment of the love of our neighbor. Jesus said that these two Commandments contain the whole law of God and the Prophets. Do you know why?— If I place all the books, which I possess, into a box, each and every book will be enclosed in that box; that box will contain all my books. Therefore, whoever has that box, has likewise each and every one of my books. So, too, the Ten Commandments, which God has given to us, are all contained in the great Commandment: "Thou shalt love God and thy neighbor!" Whoever keeps this great Commandment of the love of God and of one's neighbor, will also be keeping each and every one of the other Commandments of God. **These two Commandments of the love of God and of our neighbor contain the whole law of God.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

b) Let me show you this even more clearly. The first three of the Ten Commandments of God refer to the *Love of God.* They command us to worship God and to be faithful to Him, to reverence His Holy Name, to keep holy the Lord's day. By keeping these three Com-

mandments faithfully, we show that we really love God. You see, than, that these three Commandments help us to keep the great Commandments of the love of God. At the same time they direct, or show, us how to avoid, or shun, whatever is against the love of God.—The other seven of the Ten Commandments of God refer to the *love we owe to our neighbor.* They forbid us to show disrespect to our lawful superiors, especially our parents; they forbid us to injure our neighbor in his life, his purity, his property, his honor and his family. By observing these seven Commandments faithfully, we show that we have true love towards our neighbor. Consequently these seven other Commandments of God help us to keep the great Commandment of the love of our neighbor. At the same time they direct, or show, us how to avoid, or shun, whatever is against the love we owe to our neighbor. No wonder, then, that Christ has said: "On these two Commandments depend the whole law and the Prophets" (Matt. xxii, 40). Therefore St. Paul, too, says: "Love is the fulfilling of the law" (Rom. xiii, 10); that is to say, whoever really loves God and his neighbor will keep the whole law, will do whatever God has commanded. **These two Commandments of the love of God and of our neighbor contain the whole law of God, because all the other Commandments are given either to help us to keep these two, or to direct us to shun what is opposed to them.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

Write on the blackboard:

1. "Love thy neighbor as thyself!"
2. Charity—gift of God (Divine virtue)—by which we love our neighbor as ourselves—"for the love of God."
3. Love of God and love of neighbor—contain whole law of God. Ten Commandments of God—help us to love God and neighbor;—direct us to shun sins against love of God and our neighbor.

Synthesis. "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself!" That is a sacred duty of every Christian; of

course oftentimes it is a very hard duty. Let us, therefore, always bear in mind the teachings concerning the Good Samaritan.—Who is our neighbor? Must we love our neighbor? Which is the second of the great Commandments that contain the whole law of God? Which is the first of these two Commandments? Why must we love our neighbor? Tell me some other reasons. For whose sake must we love our neighbor? Must we also love our enemies? Can we love our neighbor as we ought by our own natural powers? Who must help us to do this? What then is Charity? When did you receive this heavenly gift? Which Commandments contain the whole law of God? Why do these two Commandments contain the whole law of God? *(Have the children read the answers from the Catechism. Assign the lesson for the next class).*

Application. 1. Now make a little examination of conscience! Do you all love one another with all your heart? Is there not perhaps a little spark of anger or envy or joy over the misfortune of your neighbor in your soul? Did you not often say: "I cannot bear the sight of that person!" Is that charity?—Are you kind and friendly to your brothers and sisters? Yes, believe me, if you cannot get along with one another now, God will not have any use for you in Heaven. Why! you would fight and quarrel even in Heaven. In Heaven there is only love and peace. Yes, God is very strict in regard to charity. You have already heard that from the mouth of Jesus Himself. Therefore the Apostles, too, time and again preached to the Christians about charity or love, particularly St. John. Do you know the story?

When the beloved disciple, John, was old and weak, he could no longer come into the church. But neither could he rest quietly at home. He thought to himself most likely: There is time enough for that in the cemetery. Therefore he had his followers carry him into the church on Sundays, so that he might be able to preach to the Christians. You can imagine how everything

became quiet and still as a church-mouse, when he began to preach to the people. Would you not like to have listened to this old, venerable Bishop?—I will tell you what he preached about. "Little children, love one another!" Then the sermon was over. That is a short sermon, is it not? The next time there were divine services he preached again the same five words: "Little children, love one another!" The Saint gave the same sermon the third and the fourth time: "Little children, love one another!" Finally this was too much for the people, and some of them asked him directly: "Why do you always preach the same thing?" Then the Apostle answered: "Because the Lord commanded me. If you do that,—if you love one another, it is enough!" Jesus said to the lawyer: "Go, and do thou in like manner!" I, too, say: "Go, and do in like manner.—Little children, love one another!"

2. Now look again into your heart! Is there no enmity there? Do you know how a person acts, who is without charity?—He can no longer look at the person, whom he hates; he will not give him a friendly greeting anymore, and he wishes him all sorts of evil things. Have you perhaps acted like that in the past? Is that Christian? How did Christ pray on the Cross?—To forgive is Christian; to be unforgiving and hateful and unkind to one's neighbor is unchristian. Have you perhaps even now enmity or anger in your heart towards others?—If so offer your hand to each other this very day. Say to each other: "Let us make up again!" See, if you refuse to be kind to any one of your companions, you can no longer say a sincere Our Father. As often as you say: "Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those that trespass against us," you lie to God; for what you say is not true,—you do not wish to forgive your enemy. And at the same time you curse yourself; for God will some time do the very same thing to you that you do to your enemy. Your prayer is really an insult to God.

But what ought you to do, when anger begins to boil like hot water within you? And when the devil ap-

proaches and whispers into your ear: "Do not stand for that! Do not put up with that!"—what should you do? Do not listen to that liar and deceiver! But what should you do? I am going to tell you a secret. Pray an Our Father for your enemy and one for yourself, so that God may be merciful to both of you. And if things are still restless within you, pray one more Our Father, until the dark clouds of anger and hatred have passed away from your heart and things have become bright again like the blue heavens after a storm and the sun of charity for your neighbor begins again to shine. "Whoever lives in strife with his neighbor, cannot live in peace with God," says St. Augustine.

LESSON III.

The Corporal Works of Mercy.

Catechetical Unit:

Which are the chief corporal works of mercy? L. XIX, Q. 223.

(N. B. In the two following lessons a) signifies Presentation, b) Explanation, c) Application).

Preparation. James the Less was a worthy disciple or pupil of his Divine Master. The Jews cast him down from the pinnacle of the temple. Dying the Saint prayed: "Lord, forgive them, for they know not what they are doing!" See, he was a perfect Christian! By what can we recognize a true Christian?—Jesus has told us that: "By this shall all men know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another" (John xiii, 35). Yes, charity or love for one another is the sign, the mark, of the true Christian. Even the heathens wondered at that and said: "See the Christians, how they love one another!" But how ought we to love our neighbor?—We learned that from the ex-

ample of the Good Samaritan.—*(Question the pupils briefly on the preceding lesson).*

Charity is the duty of a Christian. But genuine charity may be recognized in deeds or works of charity and mercy. What works of mercy did the Good Samaritan perform?—St. Elizabeth, too, was a Good Samaritan. She helped wherever she could. To lessen the needs of others and to soothe bitter sufferings of heart—that was her heart's delight.

Aim. I am going to tell you something of the good that Elizabeth did to the poor. This Saint was mercy clothed in bodily form. From her we all can learn *how to perform the corporal works of mercy.* And that is what Christ wills; for He has said: "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy."

Presentation, Explanation and Application.

1. To feed the hungry and 2. to give drink to the thirsty.

a) St. Elizabeth was the wife of the noble Count Louis of Thuringia. Once there was a great famine in the land; it lasted nearly two years. The poor people wandered about the fields and the woods, trying to find roots, herbs and berries to satisfy in a scanty manner the pangs of hunger. They even devoured the meat of animals that had perished. Many people died a slow, terrible death of famine. This misery caused deep sorrow to the good Countess Elizabeth. It gave her no rest day or night. How then did she help?—At that time there happened to be a great deal of money in her treasury—about 64,000 pieces of gold. Elizabeth took the money and gave it all away to the poor people. There was also a great deal of grain in the storerooms. She distributed it all to her dear countrymen, in order to save them from death by hunger. At her castle each day nearly 900 poor persons were fed. Elizabeth herself ministered food and drink to the hungry and thirsty.

Now when the Count returned home from the war, the servants accused their mistress of having given away everything and brought ruin upon the household. But the noble Count replied to them in these beautiful words: "Let my dear Elizabeth do good for God's sake! We shall not become poor from giving alms."

b) Elizabeth was a wealthy Countess. She could have led a quiet and prosperous life like other noble women during the famine. But she preferred to be content with bread and water, in order that her dear poor people might not have to suffer hunger. That is a beautiful work of mercy: **to feed the hungry and to give drink to the thirsty.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard; see the diagram below just above the synthesis).*

But tell me, why was Elizabeth merciful to the needy?— Christ Himself has given us an example; He fed the hungry in the desert in a miraculous manner. And He gave to His disciples and to us all the beautiful teaching: "Whosoever shall give you to drink a cup of water in My name, because you belong to Christ: Amen I say to you, he shall not lose his reward" (Mark ix, 40). But Elizabeth wanted to be a faithful disciple of her Divine Master. The more she could give away, the happier she was; for to show mercy to others makes one happy. "If you want to be happy, you must make others happy." Thereby her wealth, of course, became less. But the poorer she grew in regard to her money and possessions, the wealthier she became in regard to grace in her heart and glory in Heaven. Which is worth more?

c) Would you not also like to do good like another Elizabeth? I know many of you will think: "Yes, if I were as rich as Elizabeth, I would also help and give to the poor." But to do that one does not have to possess much money, but only a good heart. You too can sometimes feed the hungry and give drink to the thirsty.—Share your piece of bread with some poor child for the love of Jesus,—thereby you have given it to Jesus Himself. Perhaps at Christmas the Christ

Child visits you with rich presents. Make some other child happy too! Happiness shared with others is double happiness. Or perhaps in the neighborhood there is a poor sick person. Ask your parents to permit you to bring some of the good things you have to eat to that poor sick person. Those are works of mercy, and the good God will not forget a single one of them. —Now listen to what follows!

3. To clothe the naked.

a) Love makes one inventive. We see that too in Elizabeth. By continually bestowing alms at times her money gave out. If then she had nothing more to give, she even offered her clothing to the poor. Once she met a poor man on the street, who appeared all miserable and sick and very poorly clothed. When he saw the Countess, he besought in most imploring tones: "For the love of Christ give me an alms!" Elizabeth had not any money in her pocket. But she could not bear to let the poor man's request go unanswered. Therefore she pulled off her new and costly mantle and gave it to the beggar.—At home Elizabeth spent her leisure hours at the spinning-wheel; her servants had to work with her. Then she made clothing for the poor. But Elizabeth used to go all alone and secretly into the houses of the poor and distribute the clothing with generous hand. And when the poor rejoiced and were very happy, she, too, felt joy in her heart. The noble Countess loved especially to visit the poor mothers. On those occasions she would take the little children of these women into her arms, as though they were her own children; she would also bring warm clothing along with her, so that these poor little creatures might not be obliged to freeze.

b) That too is a noble work of mercy: **to clothe the naked.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).* How the Saviour delights to see one perform this work of mercy, He Himself once showed us so beautifully. I wonder do you know the story of St. Martin?—He was a brave soldier. Once on a bitter cold winter day a

beggar met him. This beggar was dressed very scantily. Martin did not spend a long time in considering what to do. He took out his sword, cut his mantle in two and gave half of it to the beggar. And what happened? The next night the Saviour appeared to him surrounded by angels and wearing that piece of the mantle on His shoulders. The Saviour said to the angels: "Martin has clothed Me with this mantle!" Do you see? What one does to the poor, one does to Christ Himself. Elizabeth knew that very well. Consequently for the love of Jesus she gave away even her own clothing to the poor.

c) If our dear Saviour were to meet you, dear children, half clothed like that beggar, would you not give Him something? O, yes, I believe that you would do that with the greatest joy. You would be very happy, if He were to take something from you. Perhaps at home you have some piece or other of clothing, that you do not need. Ask your parents whether you may give it to a poor child. If you do, you have given it to Jesus Himself. Our Blessed Saviour will thank you a thousand times for that favor; for He is a good paymaster. With every good work that you perform the garment of grace for your soul becomes more beautiful; and what a lovely heavenly garment you will some day receive for that!

4. To ransom the captive.

a) Elizabeth and her poius husband Louis loved each other as much as brother and sister love each other. But soon the bond of love was broken. The Emperor ordered a Crusade to be announced. He wanted to rescue the Holy Land from the hands of the infidels, and to free the poor Christian slaves. The noble Count, Louis, too, became a Crusader: "I want to enter the holy war!" When Elizabeth heard that, she became frightened unto death. Dark forebodings arose in her soul: "I shall never see him again on earth!" With heavy heart she consented to his plan.—

What Elizabeth had surmised soon came true. The news came: "The Count is dead!" In greatest sorrow Elizabeth cried out: "Alas! he is dead. Poor woman that I am. Oh, my poor children! Now all the world and all that is dear to me is dead to me. Now comfort Thou me, O Father of widows and orphans! O my God! console me. O my Jesus! strengthen Thou me in my weakness."

b) Really it makes one sore at heart to see how this poor woman's heart nearly broke for sorrow. But why did Elizabeth give up the one, who was dearest to her on earth?—For the love of Jesus; for the sake of her dear brothers, the poor Christian slaves. That was an heroic work of mercy; **to ransom the captive.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).* Indeed, I believe that Elizabeth would have preferred to go herself into the Holy Land and lay down her own life for the poor slaves and captives.

c) Can you, too, assist in the performance of this work of mercy?—In a much more miserable condition than the Christian slaves are the poor heathen children. Therefore Christian missionaries buy them from their heartless parents and make pious Christian children of them. But to do that money is necessary. Consequently you ought to contribute gladly your mite to the Society of the Holy Childhood! Every month the Christ Child comes and begs of you: "Christian children! Give Me something for My poor heathen children." Can you be so unmerciful as to say: "I do not want to give anything. Do not trouble me"? If so, the poor heathen children will have to accuse you some day before God: "This heartless child has preferred to waste its pennies for sweets!" How disgraceful that would be!

5. To harbor the harborless.

a) In the days of St. Elizabeth traveling was still a very difficult matter; for strangers were generally obliged to depend upon the good favor of kind people

for a lodging. But no stranger ever rapped at Elizabeth's house in vain. In her castle every stranger found rest and kind hospitality. To show hospitality to the stranger was, therefore, particularly in those days a great deed of mercy. Our Catechism calls this work of mercy: **to harbor the harborless.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*—But this noble woman was not only a kind and loving mother to strangers. Many children had lost their parents by reason of famine and sickness. Therefore the Saint built a large orphan asylum, in order to give harbor or hospitality to poor abandoned children. So Elizabeth was also a mother to the orphans. Oftentimes she visited her dear little ones; but never did she come empty-handed. Each time she brought joy to her dear little orphans by giving them little presents, apples, nuts, cakes, playthings. Then the children would hasten out to meet her, when they saw her coming in the distance, and grasping her hand would cry out: "Mother! Mother!"

b) But why did Elizabeth love to perform just this particular work of kindness?—Jesus once said: "He that shall receive one such little child in My name, receiveth Me" (Matt. xviii, 5). To receive Jesus and to show Him hospitality, what a great blessing! The Saint knew these words of the Lord very well. Therefore, she was a kind and solicitous mother to these poor children. Such a poor child must, then, be a precious jewel in the eyes of God. Yes, indeed; but do you know why?—Every child, even the least of all, possesses within itself an inestimable treasure—an immortal soul; and every child, even the poorest, is a child of God. That is the reason, why our dear Lord values this work of mercy so highly.

c) *To harbor the harborless*—can you too do that? See, in winter-time there is often a great shortage of work. How many a poor workingman is forced to suffer hunger and cold? And when evening comes, he too would like to have a place to rest. What is he to do? He is obliged to rap at the door of good people

and ask for money for a night's lodging. Have pity on such a one and ask your parents for a little alms for the poor man! Or better still, you yourselves give him some of the pennies you have saved, so that the poor man may obtain a place to sleep for the night. A hearty "May God reward you for it!" is the best thanks and recompense.

6. To visit the sick.

a) After the death of her husband Elizabeth began to offer the love of her heart to the poor with greater fervor and generosity. But particularly to the sick was she a true Sister of Mercy. At Marburg she had a hospital built. She went there each day with her servants and nursed the sick with her own hands. She gave them medicine, bound up their wounds and sores, and spoke words of kindly comfort to them. Yes, she even kissed the wounds and sores of the sick. She also received the sick into her own house. She placed a boy, who was suffering from a terrible illness, into her own bed. After the death of the boy she showed hospitality to a girl, who was suffering from leprosy, and took care of that child, washed it and clothed it each morning.

b) Thus did the Saint practice the sixth work of mercy: **to visit the sick.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).* That was indeed a difficult sacrifice for Elizabeth. And yet, it became easy for her to do it. How was that possible?—Whenever she saw a sick person, immediately she thought to herself: "God has sent that person to me." Then she remembered Jesus: how good and kind He is, and how He Himself comes to the poorest and the most miserable and kisses them, as it were,—in Holy Communion! Elizabeth wanted to become like her Divine Master in love.

c) Each one of you can now and then become a Brother or a Sister of Mercy. You think that I am fooling; no, I am deeply in earnest. You can sometimes visit a sick person, get things for him, clean and dust his little room; or you can talk kindly and sympathet-

ically with him, relate something to him, or read for him out of a book. That brings joy to the heart of the poor sick man.

7. To bury the dead.

a) Neither did Elizabeth desert the sick in their hour of death. She assisted them during their last hour with her pious prayers. And then too, she performed for them the last work of mercy: **to bury the dead.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).* With her own hands she wrapped up the corpse in the shroud, oftentimes even bringing the winding-sheet with her; she kept the wake during the night and then she went to the grave, praying devoutly. One would almost think, that it was one of her own dear friends and acquaintances, that had died.

b) That was truly a beautiful work of love. God thinks a great deal of that. We know that from Bible History.—Thus did Tobias act; and he received his reward for that, too. Joseph of Arimathea performed this work of mercy for Jesus. To bury the dead was especially among the early Christians an office of honor.

c) *To bury the dead*—that, of course, you cannot do. But neither is it necessary; other people will take care of that. But like St .Elizabeth you, too, can accompany the funeral to the cemetery. But you may not do as many modern Christians, who go along with the funeral talking and laughing and entertaining one another. Rather pray a fervent Our Father; that acts like a wonderful balsam upon the Poor Soul.

Write on the blackboard:

The Corporal Works of Mercy:

a) to feed the hungry;
b) to give drink to the thirsty;
c) to clothe the naked;
d) to ransom the captive;
e) to harbor the harborless;
f) to visit the sick;
g) to bury the dead.

Synthesis. There are many other beautiful things, that might be related of St. Elizabeth. But this is enough. You see clearly, that this Saint was indeed a Good Samaritan. She is for all of us a glorious example in the performance of works of Christian mercy or charity.—Let us now recite the seven corporal works of mercy together. *(Have the pupils read the answer together from the Catechism. Assign the lesson for the next class).* We ought to show our love particularly to the poor, the widows and the orphans like St. Elizabeth. That is what God wants too. He says so expressly in the Holy Scriptures.

Concluding Application. 1. There are people, who have no heart for the poor. They see others in need and remain cold and even laugh about it. If a poor person asks them for an alms, they become angry immediately and begin to scold and to say: "Miserable beggars!" But the time will come, when they will be poorer than the poorest beggar. Just think of Dives! How glad he would have been if he could have gotten only a single drop of water! And you yourselves know what will happen at the Last Judgment. Jesus has told us all about it in advance. After the good will have received their reward, Christ will say to those at His left: "Depart from Me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire! For I was hungry, and you gave Me not to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave Me not to drink; I was a stranger, and you took Me not in; naked, and you covered Me not; sick and in prison, and you did not visit Me." But those on His left will say: "Lord when did we see Thee hungry or thirsty, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister to Thee?" And He will reply to them: "Amen, I say to you, as long as you did it not to one of these least of My brethren, neither did you do it to Me" (Matt. xxv, 43s).—Where shall we see Elizabeth some day? At the right of the Judge we shall see her. She will stand in the foremost ranks wearing on her head a wonderful heavenly

crown; for every work of mercy will shine in this crown as a precious jewel.

2. Do you also want to wear such a lovely crown some day in Heaven?—If so, then become a little Good Samaritan. Every little work of mercy will become an intercessor for you at God's throne. Every work of mercy is capital, which is invested with God and will bring interest in its own good time. Remember well what St. John Chrysostom, the great doctor or teacher of the Church says: "Give away what is perishable, and receive instead a reward, that is eternal! Reckon well! See, you give temporal things, and receive instead eternal things. You give what you must lose some time or other, and receive instead what is worth a thousand times more, what you can keep for all eternity!"

LESSON IV.

The Spiritual Works of Mercy.

Catechetical Unit:

Which are the chief spiritual works of mercy? L. XIX, Q. 222.

Preparation. Dear children, it is possible for a man to be poor and miserable as regards his body and his soul. Whoever gives help to another in the needs of his body performs the *corporal* works of mercy; whoever extends aid to another in regard to the needs of his soul performs the *spiritual works of mercy. (Question the pupils briefly on the foregoing lesson).* You know, then, the corporal works of mercy. St. Elizabeth did so many works of mercy for the love of Christ, for God's sake. The true Christian does all for the love of God and for a reward from God.

Now tell me, what is worth more: help given in the needs of the body or help extended in the needs of the

soul?—The soul is of more value than the body. Therefore the spiritual works of mercy are more valuable than the corporal works in the sight of God.

Aim. Now I am going to show you: *how you can perform the spiritual works of mercy.*—A beautiful example in this matter is St. Vincent de Paul. He is a true father of the poor. Many beautiful things might be related to you in regard to the aid he showed to the poor, especially poor children, in the needs of their body. However, today I am going to tell you, how he helped the poor in the needs of their *soul*—their spiritual needs.

Presentation, Explanation and Application.

1. To admonish the sinner.

a) In the days of St. Vincent—that was about 300 years ago—convicts were not locked up in a prison, but were condemned to the galleys (war-ships). In every galley 125 convicts were chained to the oar-seats. They were forced to work day and night. It is almost impossible to describe how great was the misery and wretchedness of these poor unfortunates. Most of them were coarse and vulgar as the animals. Instead of repenting for their sins they blasphemed God just like the damned in Hell.—Now St. Vincent was sent as a pastor to these convicts. When he visited the criminals for the first time, he found them to be more like devils than men. Every word that he spoke to them about God and religion made them furious with rage. And yet, the Saint succeeded in converting these savage men. How did he accomplish it?—He sought to win their hearts by love and kindness. He helped wherever he could. He spoke kindly to them, as though they were his best friends. And when one of them would attack him with angry words, he would remain calm and patient and meek under it all. And see, the cold and hardened hearts of these sinners gradually thawed out, just as in the springtime the ice thaws under the influ-

ence of the rays of the sun. Many of them became reconciled with God and received the Holy Sacraments. Great sinners became great penitents.

b) Do you see? St. Vincent lived in the midst of criminals. These sinful men were on the way to eternal perdition. But the Saint brought them back to the path that leads to Heaven—he admonished the sinners. Is not that the greatest work of mercy—to lead sinners from the ways of sin to the way that leads to Heaven—**to admonish sinners?** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard; see the diagram below just above the synthesis).*—Many of these poor sinners are in Heaven a long time already, and will be thankful for all eternity for the work of mercy he showed them. Of course, to admonish sinners is oftentimes a very difficult task. How did St. Vincent accomplish that work?—St. Francis de Sales once said: "One can catch more flies with a single drop of honey than with a whole barrel of vinegar." He means, that one can accomplish more by *one* kind word than by a hundred hard and bitter words. That is perfectly true. Kind words open men's hearts. St. Vincent, too, could have done very little with unkind words. But by means of kind and friendly words he soon won the hearts of his men.

c) Would you not also like to perform this beautiful work of mercy—to admonish the sinner? Yes, as a matter of fact that is even your duty at times. Your brother has perhaps stolen money from a neighbor. You saw it. A wicked child laughs at this deed. But a good child says: "If that happens again, I will tell your parents!" Even though the father were to make use of the stick, that would not matter. What hurts the body often does good to the soul.

2. To instruct the ignorant.

a) Once three Protestants entered into a dispute with St. Vincent about matters of our holy Faith. Two of these men were good Christians. They soon recognized that the Catholic Faith is the true Faith, and

they became children of the Catholic Church. But the third one led a life of sin. Therefore he would not listen to becoming a Catholic. A year later a mission took place. That unbeliever, too, came out of curiosity to listen to the sermons. The grace of God gave him no rest. Soon he, too, became convinced of this Truth: "Yes, the Catholic Church is ruled by the Holy Ghost; she is the Church of Christ." He came to St. Vincent and declared: "Now I, too, want to become a Catholic!" The following Sunday he was to make a public profession of Faith in the church. But many doubts still arose in his mind. He saw a statue of the Blessed Virgin in the church, that was made very poorly. Then he said to himself: "But really I cannot believe, that in this piece of stone there dwells a power of God, which is able to help me." So ignorant was this man! St. Vincent then instructed him, saying: "The Church has never said or taught, that the statue of a Saint made of stone or wood has the power of God within it." Then he called a boy and asked him: "What does the Church teach about the veneration of sacred images?" The boy knew his Catechism and so gave the correct answer at once. Then the man's eyes were opened, and he was received into the Catholic Church.

b) These three men were on the path of error. But they were in a false faith through no fault of their own, but rather because of ignorance. St. Vincent instructed these ignorant men in the teachings of the true Faith. That is a spiritual work of mercy—**to instruct the ignorant.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).* Why?—Who knows but that they might have even lost their souls in their false faith. One of them was already on the road to hell.

c) Can you, too, *instruct the ignorant?*—Your younger brothers or sisters are learning the Catechism. But it seems as if the teachings of religion do not want to enter their minds. Have sympathy with them and help them to learn! You can help them also with their writing and counting. But be kind and loving with

them. Or tell the little tots something about the Christ Child, about the Mother of God, about the Guardian Angel. They like to hear that, and it pleases God, too.

3. To counsel the doubtful.

a) One day Vincent was called to a sick farmer. All the people considered the man to be a good Christion; for he used to go to church regularly and to the Holy Sacraments. But now the poor man was filled with doubts and fears; for on a certain occasion years before he had committed a detestable sin and had never confessed it. His conscience insisted: "Out with the sin, otherwise you will be lost!" But the devil whispered to him: "You do not have to confess that anymore; for it happened such a long time ago!" Vincent soon noticed: "That man has something else on his conscience." Therefore he spoke kindly to the sick man, saying: "See, you are fast approaching the end. Make an accounting with the good God. Make a general confession of your whole life!" Then the secret came out. The sinner confessed all. After the confession he was very happy, and said: "Without that general confession I would have been condemned to Hell."

b) Do you see? That poor sinner was in doubt as to what he ought to do; he did not know what sort of advice to give himself nor how to help himself. Vincent gave to the doubting man the correct advice: "Make a general confession!" Thus everything was made right again. The Saint snatched a soul away from the devil. That is a work of mercy—**to counsel the doubtful.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard.*

c) You, too, can at times perform this work of love. See, here is a child that is afraid of its father. It would like to tell a lie, in order to escape being punished. Give that child the good counsel: "Speak out openly! Prefer to endure the punishment from your father ten times rather than to be punished once by the heavenly Father! For God punishes every untruth." (Later on when you get to be big, you can more easily

give good counsel to the doubting. Many a person says: "What shall I do? Good advice is much needed here!" If you do not know what to say, just advise such a person: "Pray, pray to the Holy Ghost! He will surely inspire you as to what you ought to do!")

4. To comfort the sorrowful.

a) Among the number of the galley convicts Vincent found also a certain young man. He refused to move his hands to work; he preferred to let them beat him until he was half dead. He just wanted to die. The Saint spoke to him kindly and friendly like a good father. Suddenly the heart of the poor young man became as soft as wax. He began to weep bitterly and related to the Saint the story of his sad plight. The convict had been a workman in the employ of a goldsmith and had supported his family in an honorable manner. His employer made a counterfeit stamp or seal and hid it in the dwelling place of his employee. The matter became known. The goldsmith knew how to lie out of the scrape, and thus the guilt clung to the young man. The workman was then condemned to the galleys; but his family had to endure the shame and bitter privation. What then did the Saint do? He wanted to take the punishment upon himself, in order to free the poor unfortunate man. Therefore he put the clothing of the convict upon himself and fastened the chains to his own feet. Of course, this was discovered and Vincent was again set free.

b) Here St. Vincent performed a double work of mercy. The poor convict was sorrowful unto death; he simply could not bear to live any longer as a galley convict. Then the Saint comforted the sorrowful man in a most kind manner. That is a spiritual work of mercy—**to comfort the sorrowful.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).* But Vincent did more than that; he himself became a galley convict. That was a corporal work of mercy—*to ransom the captive.*

c) How can you comfort the sorrowful?—Here is a child, whose father or mother has died. It is very sad over that and feels as though it would like to die too. Be kind and sympathetic with such a poor child; that will make it feel good. Or you notice a child crying bitterly, because some sorrow or misfortune has come upon it. Ask that child kindly what the trouble may be. To dry tears is a work of Christian Charity.—(Later on you can do much more. For the whole world is full of misery and distress. But one must give comfort in a Christian manner. Many a person says: "Things have to be as they are; but all will change for the better after a while." That is not Christian comfort. Such a person ought to say: "It is God's holy will. What God does is well done. Trust in God and let Him rule!" "Whom the Lord loveth He chastiseth: and He scourgeth every son whom He receiveth" (Heb. xii, 6). "The way of the cross is the way to Heaven." Those are words of Christian comfort).

5. To bear wrongs patiently.

a) While a young priest Vincent lived in Paris. In the same house there lived also a certain official. Once this man forgot to lock the trunk, in which he had preserved his money. Vincent happened to be sick abed in that house. The druggist apprentice brought him the medicine. On this occasion the young man entered the room of the official, saw the money and stole 600 dollars. When the official came home he noticed at once: The money is gone! All excited he hurried to Vincent and asked: "Where is my money?"—"I do not know anything about it," replied the priest. Then the man commenced to shout and storm and chased Vincent from the house. Then he spread the news broadcast: "Vincent is a thief!" But Vincent only said: "My God, what should I do? Thou knowest the truth." How then did the matter end?—After six years the truth came out. The thief, the apprentice, confessed his crime. He sent for the official and said: "I stole the money!" That

pained the official very much, because he had calumniated the pious priest so dreadfully. Immediately he wrote a letter to Paris, begged the Saint's pardon and declared: "I myself will come and make satisfaction with a rope about my neck, if you do not forgive me." Vincent, however, had long ago pardoned and forgotten all.

b) A terrible injustice had been done the Saint. To be called a thief far and wide is certainly painful for anyone, but particularly for a priest. But Vincent did not feel any resentment in his heart even for a single moment. He thought of Jesus: How much injustice did not men heap upon Him, and yet He bore it all patiently. That is a spiritual work of mercy—**to bear wrongs patiently.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).* And why? Just tell me what would other people have done under such an accusation?—Overflowing with anger they would have said: "We will not stand that. We must have our rights!" Then they would have gone to the judge at once. But what would have come from such conduct? Punishment and disgrace! Vincent would not hear of such a thing; rather suffer the injustice. And so he was merciful to his enemy. What happened later on?—When the innocence of the Saint had become known, that official recognized his injustice and repented it bitterly. For that reason, too, it was a work of mercy.

c) Perhaps at some time injustice will be done you also. A school companion speaks words of insult or ridicule against you. Do not pay any attention to them! Do not go at once to the teacher. Just think to yourself: Christ has suffered so much; a true Christian must endure something too. Or somebody else says something evil about you. If it is true, better your conduct; if it is untrue, better your conduct still more. Say too, as St. Vincent did: "God knows it!"—Blessed Clement Hofbauer once went begging for the orphan children into a certain hotel at Warsaw. A man, who was playing cards there, spat into Clement's face.

Hofbauer calmly wiped his face, and said: "Sir, that was for me; now give me something for my orphan children." That shameless fellow became frightened, gave him an alms for the children, and after a few days made a general confession to the Saint).

6. To forgive all injuries.

a) Vincent was counsellor to the Queen. At that time a war was being waged and much misery reigned in the land. Now a man once publicly insulted the Saint in the streets by saying: "You are the cause of all this misfortune, because you do not give better advice to the Queen!" Now did Vincent perhaps scold the man or accuse him in the court?—Oh, no, indeed! Instead of scolding and trying to justify himself, Vincent cast himself on his knees and acknowledged: "I am indeed a great sinner and I beg your pardon, if I am to blame for your having insulted me!" The man was deeply ashamed, when the venerable priest humbled himself so deeply. Filled with sorrow he went to Vincent the next day and heartily begged his pardon. The Saint received him like a good friend. And behold! after a few days the poor sinner made a confession of his entire life.

b) This man had offended Vincent grievously. But the Saint was not angry with him even for a single moment; on the contrary, he forgave him at once with all his heart. That is a work of mercy—**to forgive all injuries.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).* Why? —The offender soon recognized his injustice. That was the beginning of his conversion. Perhaps otherwise he would never have bettered himself.

c) Did you, too, always act as Vincent did? Many children are very sensitive. At every unjust word or look they at once become irritated and for days bear a secret hatred in their hearts. How did our Blessed Saviour act? What did He say?—To forgive is hard indeed, but beautiful and Christian.

7. To pray for the living and the dead.

a) All Saints love and practice prayer. Vincent, too, was a man of prayer. Yes, his whole life was really one continual prayer. Even on the street he continually worshipped God in the little church of his heart. But why so much prayer?—There are so many sinners on earth and so many Poor Souls in Purgatory. They need the alms of our prayers very urgently. That is the reason why the Saint prayed so earnestly and zealously for the living and the dead, even for his enemies.—Once a certain poor man asked the Saint, whether he wanted to know what people were saying about him. Vincent answered: "Yes, I should like to know." The poor man replied: "People are scolding about you in the whole city; for you are to blame that the poor are kept locked up in the hospital." A very strict discipline had been introduced in the hospital. The Saint answered quietly: "Good, my friend; I am going to pray at once for these poor sinners."

b) Why did he pray?—In order that God might not punish the poor sinners, but rather that He might be merciful to them. And why did the Saint pray for the Poor Souls?—In order that God might soon release them from their sufferings in Purgatory. Consequently that, too, is a spiritual work of mercy—**to pray for the living and the dead.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

c) Everybody can perform this work of mercy. To do it you do not need to own a single penny, but only a good and pious heart. Prayer is worth more than gold or silver. Do you pray every day for your parents, that God may bless them? Do you pray for your teachers, that God may bless them? For they do so much for you. Do you pray for the Poor Souls, too, out of Christian sympathy for them?—You ought not to forget them for a single day.

Write on the blackboard:

The Spiritual Works of Mercy:
a) to admonish the sinner;
b) to instruct the ignorant;
c) to counsel the doubtful;
d) to comfort the sorrowful;
e) to bear wrongs patiently;
f) to forgive all injuries;
g) to pray for the living and the dead.

Synthesis. I have called Vincent the father of the poor. Am I right? The Saint did not grow weary of doing good to others. Tell me what works of mercy he performed. *(Question the pupils on the spiritual works of mercy in detail. Have them read the answer from the Catechism. Assign the lesson for the next class).* We, too, must not grow weary of doing good after St. Vincent's example.

Concluding Application. In life St. Vincent was a poor priest. At death he became richer than the most wealthy millionaire. When he appeared before the judgment seat of God, thousands of intercessors were there ready to meet him. Do you know who these intercessors are?—They are his works of mercy. By means of these works of mercy he had prepared a glorious place for himself in Heaven; for Jesus said to him: "Whatsoever you have done to these, the least of My brethren, you have done to Me. Now you shall shine as the sun in the house of My Father!" You would all like to exchange places with him at once, would you not?—Then do as he did. You, too, can often give a spiritual alms.

Now you know the corporal and the spiritual works of mercy. But knowing them will not *perform* them; the chief thing is to resolve to perform them. When do you want to begin?—Resolve: This very day I am going to perform at least one little work of mercy! Do you agree to do this?—Yes, you ought not to allow a single day to pass without some work of mercy.

LESSON V.

The Ten Commandments of God.

Catechetical Unit:

1) Which are the Commandments of God? L. XXIX, Q. 313.

2) Who gave the Ten Commandments? L. XXIX, Q. 314.

3) Is it enough to belong to God's Church in order to be saved? L. XXIX, Q. 310.

Preparation. Dear children, St. John says: "If any man says, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar; for he that loveth not his brother, whom he seeth, how can he love God, whom he seeth not?" (I John iv, 20). We prove our love for our neighbor by coming to his aid in his bodily and spiritual needs. Let us first review the spiritual works of mercy. *(Question the pupils briefly on the foregoing lesson).*—What would you think of a traveler, who paid no attention to the guides or sign posts on the road and who never asked anyone which was the right road to his destination? Surely such a foolish traveler would frequently miss the right road and come into places into which he never intended to come; yes, perhaps in the end he would never arrive in safety at his destination. So too, there are many foolish travelers, even Christians, who in their journey to Heaven pay no attention to the sign posts or guides on the road, which God Himself has put there. And yet, they imagine that they can get to Heaven! Whoever really is desirous of reaching Heaven must keep his eyes open to see the guides to Heaven, *the Commandments of God,* and must follow the directions of these sign posts most carefully.

Aim. Today I intend to speak to you about these Commandments of God, so that you may know what they are, who gave them and how necessary it is to follow them, if you really want to get to Heaven.

Presentation. After the chosen people of God, the Israelites, had left Egypt under the leadership of Moses, they entered into the desert. Three months after their departure they arrived at Mount Sinai. *(Show the children the location on a map).* God called Moses and he went up into the mountain. There the Lord God spoke to him, and bade him remind the people of all that He had already done for them, and how He would continue to protect them, if they remained faithful to Him. Yes, God promised to make them a chosen people. When Moses descended from the mountain and told the people all the words of the Lord, they cried out: "We will do all that the Lord hath spoken!"

Then God commanded the people to purify themselves tomorrow and the next day, and to be ready for the third day. On the morning of the third day it began to thunder and to lighten; a thick cloud covered the mountain. The top of Mount Sinai was on fire, and it shook even to its base. Then the sound of a trumpet came forth, that grew louder and louder, until the people trembled with an exceeding great fear.

When Moses had led the people to the foot of the mountain, the Lord God spoke out of the midst of the fire, saying: "I am the Lord thy God. Thou shalt not have strange gods before Me. Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain. Remember that thou keep holy the Sabbath day. Honor thy father and thy mother. Thou shalt not kill. Thou shalt not commit adultery. Thou shalt not steal. Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's goods."

And all the people noticed the voices and the flames, and the sound of the trumpet, and the mount smoking; and being terrified and struck with fear, they stood afar off. And they said to Moses: "Speak thou to us, and we will hear: let not the Lord speak to us, lest we die." But Moses went into the dark cloud wherein God

was. And the Lord God spoke to Moses and gave him two tables of stone, on which the finger of God had written the Ten Commandments. The people promised to do all that the Lord had commanded.

Then Moses coming down from the mountain built an altar and offered sacrifices to the Lord. He also took of the blood of the victims and sprinkled it upon the people, as a sign of the covenant that the Lord had that day made with them. *(Show the children a large picture of the scene).*

Explanation. 1. You can well imagine how the Israelites must have felt, when Moses came down from the mountain and told them that the Lord Almighty was about to speak to them. What did they say?—Then Moses went up into the mountain again and received this message from God: "Go to the people and sanctify them today, and tomorrow, and let them wash their garments. And they shall be ready against the third day: for on the third day the Lord will come down in the sight of all the people upon Mount Sinai. And thou shalt appoint certain limits round about, and thou shalt say to them: Take heed ye and go not up into the mount, and that ye touch not the borders thereof: every one that toucheth the mount dying let him die.—And when the trumpet shall begin to sound then let them go into the mount." What happened on the third day?—Then all became quiet, and out of the cloud God Almighty spoke: "I am the Lord, thy God, who brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. Thou shalt not have strange gods before Me Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain," etc. These are, therefore, the Ten Commandments of God as He spoke them Himself to Moses. In the Bible they are worded a little differently. In our Catechism the Ten Commandments of God are expressed in shorter and simpler form, in order that we may learn and remember them more easily; but in substance they are just the same as in the Holy Bible. Let us say them together: **The Commandments of God**

are these ten: 1. I am the Lord thy God, who brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. Thou shalt not have strange gods before Me. Thou shalt not make to thyself a graven king, nor the likeness of anything that is in the heaven above, or in the earth beneath, nor of those things that are in the waters under the earth. Thou shalt not adore them, nor serve them. 2. Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain. 3. Remember that thou keep holy the Sabbath day. 4. Honor thy father and thy mother. 5. Thou shalt not kill. 6. Thou shalt not commit adultery. 7. Thou shalt not steal. 8. Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor. 9. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife. 10. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's goods.—The Ten Commandments are sometimes called by the word *"Decalogue." (Write on the blackboard).* This word is derived from two Greek words: "Deka" (ten) and "Logos" (word or saying). Therefore the word "Decalogue" means the "ten words or commands of God."

2. a) From what I have just told you you know who it was that gave these Commandments. Our Catechism says: **God Himself gave the Ten Commandments to Moses on Mount Sinai.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard; see the diagram below just above the synthesis).* God wrote them on two tables of stone. On the one table were written the first three Commandments, which comprise man's duties towards his God; on the other table of stone were written the other seven Commandments, which contain the duties we owe to our neighbor. Thus the Ten Commandments tell us more in detail how to fulfil the great Commandment of the love of God and of our neighbor. Each of the Ten Commandments either commands or forbids something. The Lord Almighty gave these Commandments in the midst of thunder and lightning, in order to signify what those might expect, who should dare to transgress them.

But do not imagine, dear children, that the Ten Commandments were something entirely new; that before

God spoke them on the Mount no man knew anything of them. On the contrary, these Commandments have always existed from the days of our first parents. It was always wrong for man to worship false gods, to misuse the Lord's name, to disobey one's parents, to kill, to steal, etc. You remember how Cain was punished for having killed his brother Abel (Gen. iv.); and that happened, as you know, while Adam was still alive. Therefore these Commandments, at least as to substance, were not anything new. All men were obliged to observe them from the days of Adam and Eve. From the very beginning the Creator placed in the heart of man the sense of right and wrong. He gave to man what we call the "*natural law.*" The Ten Commandments, except the third one about the Sabbath-day, are all contained in that natural law. Every man knows the natural law by the voice of his *conscience*. Therefore every man can also know the Commandments of God by the voice of his conscience. The Lord God has written the natural law, the Ten Commandments, in every man's heart, and the voice of one's conscience tells one more or less plainly what God commands and what He forbids.

If man had remained in the state of innocence and holiness, this law of nature written deeply in man's heart would have been the Guardian Angel to guide man to eternal happiness. But alas! man's mind and heart became corrupted by the filth of sin. In the course of time sin, original and actual, darkened man's understanding and weakened man's will, as you remember from your Catechism. Yes, so wicked did mankind become that the greater part of Adam's children no longer heard the voice of conscience and forgot the law of God written in their hearts. That is the reason why God Almighty spoke the Ten Commandments from Mount Sinai amidst thunder and lightning, and even wrote them with His own fingers on the two tables of stone. You see, then, that the Ten Commandments of God always existed; but they were not

written down until God engraved them upon those two tables on Mt. Sinai.

b) These two tables of stone Moses placed in a chest or ark of precious wood, called the "Ark of the Covenant," in the Tabernacle; later on they were placed in the great Temple at Jerusalem. These Commandments were called the "Covenant," because by God's will they were to be regarded as a most solemn agreement or covenant between the Lord and His chosen people. God promised to be with His chosen people and to protect them; while the Israelites on their part promised to observe these Commandments faithfully. And in order to make this agreement or covenant more solemn and sacred, Moses offered a sacrifice to the Lord at the foot of the Mount, and taking the blood of the animals of the sacrifice Moses sprinkled the people and the book of the law with that blood saying: "This the blood of the covenant, which God hath enjoined unto you" (Heb. ix, 19).

c) Do these Ten Commandments bind us Christians?—I have already told you that these Commandments are written in every man's heart. Therefore all men, Christians too, must observe them. In fact when our Blessed Saviour was on earth He said these words: "Think not, that I am come to destroy the Law (the Ten Commandments) and the Prophets; I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil" (Matt. v, 17). The Saviour explained these Commandments more in detail and told us plainly how He wanted us to observe them. He does not want us Christians to keep the Ten Commandments out of fear of punishment if we disobey them. No, indeed, Jesus wants us to keep them as most dear children of our Heavenly Father, to please God. Our Catechism says: **Christ our Lord confirmed the Ten Commandments.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

3. The Israelites under the leadership of Moses formed the Church of God in the Old Testament. They believed all the teachings which God had revealed through the Patriarchs, the Prophets, and particularly

Moses. They hoped in the Redeemer to come. But was that all that God demanded of them?—The wonderful scene on Mount Sinai shows us clearly, that God demanded much more than that. What else did God want the Israelites to do?—Yes, He commanded them to observe the Ten Commandments.

Was the Old Testament, or the Synagogue, to last forever?—No, it was a mere preparation for the Kingdom of the Messias, or the Christ. And when the Redeemer, Jesus Christ, the promised Messias, had come, He founded a Church, that was to last to the end of time. Is it necessary to belong to the Church of Christ, in order to be saved?—But is it enough to belong to the Church?—Does Christ want us to do anything besides?—Jesus once said: "Not every one who saith to Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of Heaven; but he that doth the will of My Father, Who is in Heaven, he shall enter into the kingdom of Heaven" (Matt. vii, 21). When do we do the will of the Father?—When we observe the Ten Commandments of God and the Commandments of the Church. Again He said: "Every tree that does not bring forth good fruit shall be cut down and cast in the fire" (Matt. vii, 19). He means: unless you faithfully observe the Commandments of God and of the Church, you will surely be cast into Hell-fire. Therefore our Catechism says: **It is not enough to belong to the Church in order to be saved, but we must also keep the Commandments of God and of the Church.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

Write on the blackboard:

1. God gave the Ten Commandments to Moses on Mt. Sinai. Christ confirmed them.

2. To be saved—belong to the Church of Christ—keep the Commandments of God and the Church.

Synthesis. This is a most important lesson we have learned today. What are the guides or sign posts on the way to Heaven? When did God give them? To

whom did He give them? Where? Under what circumstances? What is the meaning of the lightning and thunder? Are the Commandments worded in the same way in the Bible as in our Catechism? Why are they worded shorter in the Catechism? Do all men have to observe them? Did Christ do away with the Ten Commandments? Is it enough to belong to the Church, in order to be saved? Say the Ten Commandments. *(Have the children read the answers from the Catechism. Assign the lesson for the next class).*

Application. 1. During the third year of our Blessed Saviour's public life a certain young man, distinguished for his wealth and position, came to Jesus and asked: "Good Master, what shall I do, that I may have eternal life?" The Saviour answered: "If thou wouldst enter into life, keep the Commandments." "Which Commandments?" asked the young man. Jesus then quoted from the Ten Commandments of God. "Master," replied the young man, "I have observed all this from my youth" (Matt. xix, 16s). Then Jesus, looking upon him, loved him, for He saw that the lad was of a true and upright heart, sincere and earnest and holy. You see, then, that if you want to please Jesus and save your souls, you must also obey the Commandments of God and of the Church. How important is it not, therefore, to know what these Commandments are? Are you faithful in studying your Catechism lessons, so that you may know these Commandments and "keep" them?

2. The Saints of God observed His holy law most loyally. Let me give you but one instance. About the year 163 before the Saviour came into the world the chosen people of God came under the power of the pagan Kings of Syria. One of the most cruel of these kings was Antiochus. A mother and her seven sons were led before this tyrant, who ordered them to eat the meat of the swine. But the Lord God had forbidden the Jews to eat that meat. These brave servants of the Lord God replied that they would rather

die than break the Commandments of God. When the king had heard this, he became very angry, and ordered that the seven brothers be beaten with rods. But the heroic youths still refusing to obey, Antiochus commanded frying-pans and brazen caldrons to be made red hot. Then the executioners seized the eldest and cut out his tongue; they then tore off the skin from his head, and chopped off his hands and feet; finally they threw him into the red hot frying-pot. His mother and brothers stood by encouraging him and exhorting him to persevere. When the first boy was dead, the second eldest was brought forth and the skin of his head also pulled off. But he, too, boldly refused to obey the wicked king. He was tormented like his oldest brother and finally died. The third and fourth, the fifth and the sixth brother willingly offered themselves to the executioners and died proclaiming their faith in the Lord God. The youngest of the brothers still remained. The king by kindness hoped to win him over. He promised him honors, riches, even his own special friendship, if he would renounce the Jewish religion. But the youth would not give in. Then the king asked the mother to persuade her son to save his life, but she only the more exhorting him begged him to be a worthy successor to his six martyred brothers. While his mother was speaking to him, he cried out boldly: "I will not obey the king, neither will I break the law of my God!" When the king had heard this he became greatly angered, and ordered the boy to be even more cruelly tortured than the rest. Last of all the mother gladly went to death with the same heroic constancy. What a glorious invitation to us all to be faithful always in observing God's holy laws! Ask Jesus to help you never to offend Him by breaking a single one of His Commandments.

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LESSON VI.

Religion.

Catechetical Unit:

1) What is the first Commandment? L. XXX, Q. 315.

2) How do we adore God? L. XXX, Q. 317.

3) How does the first Commandment help us to keep the great Commandment of the love of God? L. XXX, Q. 316.

Preparation. Dear children, to love God and to love one's neighbor—that is the kernel, the very heart, of the great Commandment, that contains the whole law of God. To love God and to love our neighbor—that too is the content of the Ten Commandments of God. In the little bud is contained the entire flower. In the great Commandment of the love of God and one's neighbor are contained the Ten Commandments. Let us review this teaching. *(Question the pupils on the foregoing lesson).*—You know that the Israelites departed from the land of Egypt. There the people adored false gods or idols. The bull (Apis) particularly was held in high honor. The heathens built a splendid temple to this animal god and offered sacrifice to it. Therefore they paid honor, which belonged to God alone, to a mere creature. That was idolatry. *A person is guilty of idolatry, when he pays divine honor to any creature or thing, as the heathens did. (Repeat together).*

God wanted to preserve His people from idolatry. Therefore He gave the first Commandment. **The first Commandment is: I am the Lord thy God: thou shalt not have strange gods before Me.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard; see the diagram below just above the synthesis).* Consequently God demands that we honor and adore Him alone as God. By the first Commandment we are commanded to pay to Almighty God due honor and adoration.

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Aim. You have been doing that heretofore. But I wonder whether you have always honored God in the right way and with all your heart? That is what I want to show you today: *how you ought to honor and adore God with your heart.*—We can see that best of all from the lives of the Saints. Therefore I am first going to tell you about a certain holy child, who is an example for us all—St. Germaine.

Presentation. St. Germaine had a poor but pious mother. Scarcely was the child three years old, when her mother began to teach her to pray and to love God as a child ought to love Him. She taught Germaine about our dear Lord and about Heaven, about the Mother of God and the Guardian Angel. Then this little maid would place herself before her mother, and looking into her eyes with child-like simplicity, she would listen devoutly to her every word. The little girl loved especially to hear the story of Jesus' bitter sufferings and death. And as she listened her heart would feel deep sympathy for our Blessed Saviour, and she would grow sad. If her mother happened to be busy working about the house and Germaine was alone in the room, she would kneel down before a picture of God's Mother and pray the Rosary or other little prayers. But her greatest joy was to be permitted to go to church with her mother. There she would pray so beautifully and devoutly, that the people wondered and said: "Just look at that child! She is an angel!" And the child felt so happy in the church, that she imagined she was in Heaven.

Germaine was only nine years old, when her mother became very sick and was obliged to leave this world. Then, of course, there was much weeping and mourning. But the pious child looked up to Heaven and prayed: "O, Mary! now thou shalt be my Mother." The father, too, became ill and could no longer earn anything. The needs of the family became so great that the poor child had to go begging. Beggar's bread is hard bread indeed. Oftentimes the child got more

bitter words than kind gifts from the people. But never did Germaine tell her father anything about this treatment, for she did not want to make him feel bad. Soon matters grew worse. A second mother came into the home. She could not bear the sight of this poor little girl and heaped all sorts of evils upon her. Nevertheless the little martyr never complained; she rather endured all quietly and with resignation out of love for Jesus.

When children grow bigger their zeal for God generally grows less. Not so with Germaine. Her pious heart was like a bud, that gradually unfolds itself and spreads far and wide a most delightful odor. Germaine was now obliged to tend the sheep. As soon as she was out in the fields she would tie a medal of the Mother of God, which her mother had left her, to a tree or a bush. She would then kneel down and begin to pray. When she heard the little bell of the neighboring church ring, she would fix her shepherd's staff into the ground, and telling her sheep to keep together she committed them to the care of God until her return. Then she would hasten off to assist at Holy Mass and was very happy to be permitted to be in Jesus' presence. The Sunday belonged entirely to God. Every time she would go to the Table of the Lord, in order to receive her Jesus. To her God was her dearest friend, her all. That was the reason too, why she never felt lonely, even when she was alone for hours at a time. She always had God before her eyes, and everything—the flowers, the bushes, the happy birds, the buzzing insects—all called out to her: "Love God!" And God loved that child. For soon the hand of God plucked this sweet smelling little flower and planted it in the heavenly Paradise.

Explanation. *I. Interior Religion.*

1. a) Germaine was a true child of God. Her entire life was a beautiful worship of God. At a very tender age her young heart opened upwards to the dear

God. How did that happen?—Already at Baptism the Holy Ghost had laid three Divine seeds into that child's heart; Faith, Hope and Charity. They were hidden at first, it is true, like the tender shoots in the earth. But as soon as her understanding awoke, Faith, Hope and Charity awoke, too, in her heart. Who can show me that?—The child heard about the good God and God's Mother and about all the beautiful truths of our holy religion. Then the child began to believe; and Faith became firmer and stronger in her heart, just as the little tree strikes it roots more firmly and deeply in the ground. This childlike Faith was already true religion—Divine worship. God was pleased with it. And why?—Whoever believes thinks to himself: What I believe comes from God, and God is eternal truth. Whoever believes honors God, adores God. **We adore God by Faith.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

b) The little Saint did not have much joy upon earth. Her life was like a dreary, rainy day. And yet, she did not complain at all. Where did she find consolation?—Germaine knew very well: All sorrow will end some day. Then the dear Lord will give me Heaven for all that I am suffering. But Heaven is worth everything; for in Heaven there is pure happiness without sorrow for all eternity. This strong trust or hope was religion, divine worship. Why?—Whoever hopes in God says to himself: I am indeed a poor sinner. But God will pardon me; for He is merciful. Whoever hopes in God, therefore, honors God, adores God. **We adore God by Hope.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

c) Germaine loved her parents most dearly. She wept bitterly at the death of her good mother. And how did she care for her faither? She preferred to go begging rather than see her father suffer want. That is the love of a good child. And much more even than father and mother did Germaine love her God. Her heart belonged to Him. To please God—that was her greatest joy. God was dearer to her than everything

else upon earth. To love God above all things—that is religion, Divine worship. **We adore God by Charity.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

d) Little Germaine kept God always before her eyes, even when outdoors in the midst of her sheep. And in the little chamber of her heart she spoke to God almost without ceasing. She raised her mind and heart to God. This is what she said: "O God! Thou art Supreme and there is no lord over Thee. All the great ones of earth in Thy sight are but miserable beggars. All men are in Thine eyes no more than contemptible worms that crawl in the dust. Yes, even the highest angels around Thy throne are only as poor glow-worms in comparison wiith the ocean of light, the sun. Thou art all, we are nothing!"—

Germaine was a poor child. But she thanked God for every gift, for every little piece of bread. And how grateful was she not for the graces of soul, particularly for Holy Mass and Holy Communion! Many a time did she say to God in the quiet of her own heart: "Thou art my Father! All that I am and all that I have comes from Thee."

To be sure, even the true child of God must at times feel much bitter suffering. We see that in the case of Germaine. How many a time did not hunger torture her! How many bitter, stinging remarks did she not have to hear from the people! How badly was she not treated by her step-mother! Other people complain at once in a very unchristian manner, when things go wrong: "Did God forget and abandon me entirely?" Was Germaine like that? No, she thought to herself: It is God's will and I humbly resign myself to the Lord!

Do you see? Germaine raised her mind and heart to God continually to adore Him, to thank Him, to obey Him, and resign herself to His holy will. In one word, she spoke to God in *prayer.* Prayer is religion, divine worship. **We adore God by prayer.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

Dear children, to believe, to hope, to love and to

pray—all this is *interior religion;* for it takes place in the heart. How then do we adore God interiorly?—*We adore God interiorly by Faith, Hope, Charity and prayer. (Repeat together).* Interior religion is the chief thing; for God looks at the heart of man.

II. Exterior Religion

1. But it is not enough to honor and adore God with the heart. Whoever is really in earnest, will show his religion also in an outward manner. With religion it is just the same as with a clock. The chief thing in a clock are the works; but the hands belong to the clock too. They tell me what time it is. So too, it is with religion. The chief thing is the heart; but the body too belongs to religion. The body is the hands of religion, as it were.—Just look at Germaine! We see how she kneels often before a statue of God's Mother in the room and also in the open air. Then she folds her hands and says the Rosary. As soon as she hears the sound of the bell, she hurries off to the church. Quietly she enters, takes Holy Water and makes a devout genuflexion before the Blessed Sacrament. Then she kneels down, folds her hands and assists at Holy Mass so devoutly, that she edifies all by her pious behaviour. At the holy Consecration she strikes her breast and prays: "O Jesus, for Thee do I live!" That is *exterior religion;* and this exterior religion is a sign of the interior religion of the heart.—*We adore God exteriorly, by devoutly assisting at the Divine services, by folding the hands, by genuflecting, by taking Holy Water, by praying aloud, by singing, by our devout behaviour during religious exercises. (Repeat together).*

2. But which of all these acts of religion is the most perfect act? Which act of religion can we perform to honor and adore the Lord God in the most perfect manner with body and soul together?—Little Germaine shows us that. Whenever she heard the bell ring early in the morning, especially on Sunday morning, she would hurry off to the church to assist at the Holy Sac-

rifice of the Mass. And during Holy Mass she kept her eyes and heart fixed on the altar and the priest. Do you know why?—She knew that on the altar under the forms of bread and wine Jesus Christ was really and truly present, and that He was offering His Body and Blood, His Soul and Divinity, to His heavenly Father for the sins of men. "This is My Blood, which is given for you. This is the chalice, the New Testament in My Blood, which shall be shed for you. Do this for a commemoration of Me." (Luke xxii, 19s). Here we see the most perfect act of religion. This is how we can adore God in the most perfect possible manner. **We adore God by sacrifice.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

Dear children, both belong together: the service of the heart and the service of the body—interior and exterior adoration. The whole man is God's; therefore we must adore God with our body and with our soul. We call this interior and exterior worship by the one word *"religion."*

3. Little Germaine never forgot these solemn words: "Thou shalt adore the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve." Therefore she bowed down before the great God day and night by making devout acts of Faith, Hope and Charity, by devout prayers, and by assisting reverently at the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. She kept the first Commandment of God most faithfully. Therefore she found it easy, too, to keep the great Commandment of the love of God. We prove our love for God by adoring Him. Almighty God gave us the first Commandment, in order to help us to keep the great Commandment of the love of God. Our Catechism says: **The first Commandment helps us to keep the great Commandment of the love of God, because it commands us to adore God alone.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).* Do you want to prove that you really love God above all things? Then keep the first Commandment of God most scrupulously.

Write on the blackboard:

1. "I am the Lord thy God: thou shalt not have strange gods before Me."
2. We adore God:
   1. *Interior religion:*
      a) Faith; b) Hope; c) Charity; d) prayer.
   2. *Exterior religion:*
      a) devoutly assisting at divine services, folding the hands, genuflecting, devout behaviour at religious exercises.
      b) sacrifice.
3. First Commandment — adoration of God — love of God.

Synthesis. Now let me see what you know of this lesson. What is the first Commandment of God? How do we adore God with our heart? How do we adore God with our bodies? Which is the most perfect act of religion? What do we call the interior and exterior adoration we owe to God? How does the first Commandment help us to keep the great Commandment of the love of God? *(Have the children read the answers from the Catechism. Assign the lesson for the next class).*

Application. 1. *To honor and adore God is a sacred duty.* But many a person imagines that if he prays every day a little and goes to Holy Mass on a Sunday he is doing wonders for the dear Lord. That is foolish conceit. God does not need us; neither does He need our prayers. See, when the morning sun rises in the heavens, thousands and thousands of flowers and buds open up to the warm rays of the sun. But the sun is not benefited thereby, even though the flowers appear ever so beautiful. The flowers and the blossoms cannot make the sun more beautiful and warmer and more resplendent. But for the flowers it is a blessing, if they in adoration, as it were, open their chalices of blossoms to the golden rays of the sun and drink in its glorious light. As with the flowers, so it is with us

children of men. The good God is not benefited by the fact, that we adore and bow down before Him. But for us it is the greatest blessing, if we by prayer open our hearts to Him and allow the rays of His grace to shine into our souls. Therefore it is a grace for us to be able to honor and adore the great God. But if we now diligently perform divine worship on earth, we shall some day be allowed to assist at the divine services with the angels in Heaven.

2. *Our religion must be a service of the heart.* Just examine your hearts! Do you recite a good morning and evening prayer every day? That is the Christian's duty. Whoever does not do that is a careless Christian. How is your prayer?—Can God really be pleased with your prayers? Are they a real worship of God? Must not God, perhaps, complain of you too: "This people—these children—honor Me with the lips only; but their heart is far from Me"? (Matt. xv, 8). Your prayer may not be a mere service of the lips; it must be a prayer of the heart. But if at prayer you are everywhere, except with God, can God bless you for such conduct? No, that is sinful praying, and God must punish it. "How will God hear your prayer, if your own heart does not hear it?" (St. Bernard).—Are you always devout at your prayers and in the church? We fold our hands when we pray. That means: O God! we are entirely in Thy hands. We lift up our hands when we pray. That means: O God! we wish to give ourselves entirely to Thee; we are Thine body and soul.

3. We ought to adore God especially by Faith, Hope and Charity. They are three heavenly blossoms. The Holy Ghost has planted them in our heart. These blossoms you ought to protect and foster diligently; for otherwise they will easily wither and dry up. Let us now make these three acts of the Divine Virtues together:

"O my God! I believe in Thee, for Thou art eternal Truth."

"O my God! I hope in Thee, for Thou art infinite mercy."

"O my God! I love Thee, for Thou art the supreme and the most perfect good."

LESSON VII.

Sins Against Faith.

Catechetical Unit:

1) How does a person sin against faith? L. XXX, Q. 321.

2) How do we fail to try to know what God has taught? L. XXX, Q. 322.

3) Who are they who neglect to profess their belief in what God has revealed? L. XXX, Q. 324.

4) Can they who fail to profess their faith in the true Church in which they believe expect to be saved while in that state? L. XXX, Q. 325.

5) Are we obliged to make open profession of our faith? L. XXX, Q. 326.

6) Who are they who do not believe all that God has revealed? L. XXX, Q. 323.

7) Are sins against faith also sins against the first Commandment? L. XXX, Q. 320 (first part).

Preparation. Dear children, it is God's will that we all honor and adore God Almighty with body and soul. Let us review this important duty. *(Question the children briefly on the preceding lesson)*—You have already learned about Faith. Is Faith necessary for salvation? Christ says: "He that believeth not shall be condemned" (Mark xv, 16). Will any Faith save a man? Which Church has the genuine Faith that will save us? Why has the Catholic Church the true Faith? How could the Catholic Church preserve the true Faith pure and undefiled throughout the centuries? Where shall we find the chief truths which the Church teaches?

Faith is necessary. But between Faith and Faith there is a whole world of difference. Our Faith must be a living Faith. We must show our Faith by our daily life and actions.

Aim. The true Faith is a great grace. To lose the Faith is, therefore, a great misfortune. We shall see that today. I am going to tell you about a certain young man, who lost his Faith. From this we shall learn: *how a Christian can sin grievously against Holy Faith,* but also how carefully you ought to preserve the grace of Faith in your hearts.

Presentation. Anthony was a good boy. His mother loved him and watched over him as the apple of her eye. But alas! she was obliged to leave this world all too soon. With her heart overflowing with motherly solicitude she spoke to Anthony as she lay upon her death bed: "My child! soon you will no longer have a mother. Listen to what I have to say to you. Fear God and keep His Commandments! Remain strong in the Faith; be faithful to His Church! May Mary be your Mother! She will protect you in all danger." Weeping the boy kissed the hand of his dying mother and promised: "Mother, I promise to do all that you ask!" Soon afterwards his mother closed her eyes in death.

The boy remained faithful to his promise for a while. But soon he grew to be careless in studying his Catechism. And when he became a young man he fell in with bad companions. Day after day he heard their wicked talk and their ridicule about prayer and attendance at church and everything, that we Catholics hold sacred. In the beginning he became angry at this sort of talk and at times spoke strong words in defence of his Faith. However, he did not have the courage and the strength to separate himself from his false friends. That was unfortunate for him. Gradually he became hardened to their continual criticism and ridicule and in the end he even laughed with them and boldly took part in those conversations.

Henceforth matters continually went from bad to worse. He read bad books, that were filled with irreligion and infidelity; yes, he swallowed those writings most greedily. For hours at a time he would think about these things, until he was no longer able to find his way out of those difficulties. "What if all that I have hitherto believed were really not true?" Such doubts troubled him continually. It was not very long before he made up his mind, saying: "Oh, one Faith is as good as another; every religion is good in God's sight." He ceased praying; he went to church only occasionally and he no longer received the holy Sacraments even at Easter time. Religion became for him only a secondary concern.

One day there was a great meeting. Anthony and his companions, too, attended it. A false apostle made a malicious speech ridiculing the Church: "The Roman Church is filled with superstition and idolatry. We Protestants have the pure Gospel of Christ. Therefore let us separate from Rome!" Some foolish young people wrote their names in a list as a sign of their apostasy from the Catholic Faith. Anthony was among the number of these blind persons. He had forgotten all. The poor young man also attended the Protestant services several times; once he even went to the Lord's Supper. But soon he had enough of this new faith. He continued to fall more deeply, until finally he lost all Faith. "There is no Heaven, no Hell, no God; everything is ended with death;"—that was henceforth his Gospel.

However, God's grace did not abandon this poor sinner. A severe illness struck him down. In his feverish dreams he saw his good mother. She was weeping bitter tears and was complaining: "Anthony! what did you promise me upon my death bed? What have you done?"—"O mother!" the lost son cried out. Suddenly he awoke. It was also an awakening from a life of sin. At once he called for a priest and confessed his grievous guilt. And when he received Jesus in the

Blessed Sacrament, he became very happy and prayed aloud: "O my Jesus! I firmly believe all that Thy holy Church teaches. In this Faith I will live and die." Only a few days more remained for this young man in which to repent. But as he was dying he prayed again so beautifully and in such a Christian manner: "O God! I have deserved death. Gladly will I die as penance for my sins. Lord, be merciful to me a sinner!"

Explanation. 1. a) There you see how a person can gradually, step by step, sink into the mire of infidelity and approach to the very edge of destruction. That young man was brought up piously and in a truly Christian manner by a good mother. How then did he come into evil ways?—Well, in the first place he began to neglect to study his Catechism. He failed to try to know what God has taught us, in order that we may be able to save our immortal souls. He sinned against Divine Faith. **A person sins against Faith by not trying to know what God has taught. 2. We fail to try to know what God has taught by neglecting to learn the Christian Doctrine.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard; see the diagram below just above the synthesis).*

But there were other causes that led Anthony away from God and made him lose his Faith. His *wicked companions* were to blame for this. If a good apple is placed among rotten ones, what happens? Is it not true, that soon the good apple becomes affected by the decay? That very thing happened to our young friend. His heart was as yet unspotted and pure; but soon in the company of bad companions it became tainted with the corruption of unbelief. What did these seducers do?—Of course at first Anthony did not want to listen to these godless conversations; he even defended his religion. What else ought he to have done?—The voice of his conscience, too, admonished and warned him: Flee away from these poisonous snakes, or they will surely destroy you! But he did not listen to the voice

of God and was unwilling to leave his friends. That was already a mortal sin. For *it is a serious danger to listen to impious language.*

Soon there came a second danger—bad books. What is found in such books?—In these writings appear false teachings about the Christian Faith. Such books, which defend a false Christian Faith or irreligion, are called *heretical books.* In other books there is to be found much ridicule about God and religion; the Church and the priests and the Sacraments are bespattered with the poison of ridicule and scorn. Such books, which preach and praise unbelief or infidelity, are called *godless and impious books.* You can easily imagine what an impression the reading of such heretical and impious books made upon the inexperienced young man of our story. Drop by drop the poison of infidelity made its way into this young man's heart; he was in danger of losing his Faith. Yes, *the reading of heretical and impious books is also a great danger to Faith and is, therefore, a grievous sin against Faith.*

What then were the fruits, which resulted from the keeping of company with wicked friends and from the reading of bad books?—Soon doubts against Faith began to make themselves felt. What did the young man think to himself?—Perhaps what my friends are saying is really true! What if that which is printed in these books is really true? Then one needs no longer to live as a Christian. Therefore a free life! That is what would have pleased him very much. What ought he to have done with those doubts?—He ought to have driven them away from his mind at once; then they would not have been sins at all. However, he entertained himself with those doubts as with dear friends. That was indeed a serious sin. *For wilful doubts against Faith are a serious sin against Faith.* Our Faith must be firm. For what we believe comes from God; but God is eternal, infallible Truth.

But Anthony did not stop at doubts against Faith. Soon a new and wicked fruit began to show itself.—

The young man became careless and indifferent towards his holy religion. He thought to himself: Every religion is true in God's sight. Therefore it is all the same whether a person be Catholic or Protestant. It does not matter so much as to what one believes, provided only that one lives a good life. To be sure, many a fallen away Catholic talks like that; but God judges otherwise. *Indifference in matters of Faith is a serious sin against Faith.*

b) A person, that thinks in that way generally, too, lives in accordance with that belief. Was not that the case with Anthony?—Very soon he found no pleasure any more in prayers and in assisting at divine service and in the reception of the Sacraments. Gradually he grew colder and more indifferent in the practice of his religion. He neglected to profess his belief in what God has taught. He failed to acknowledge the true Church in which he believed. He sinned against Faith. Our Catechism says: **A person sins against Faith by neglecting to profess his belief in what God has taught. 3. They who neglect to profess their belief in what God has taught are all those, who fail to acknowledge the true Church in which they really believe.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

4. If Anthony had continued to live as he did, doubting about his Faith, neglecting to openly acknowledge and practice his holy religion, living a careless and indifferent life, do you think that he could really hope to be saved?—He certainly could not. For whoever denies Christ and His holy religion before men, Christ will most certainly deny him also before His Father and the holy angels in Heaven. St. Paul says: "If we deny God, He will deny us" (II Tim. ii, 12). To deny Jesus Christ, and consequently to deny Faith in Christ and His Church, is a sin of the blackest kind, which on the last day will call down that dreadful sentence: "I know you not whence you are: depart from Me, all ye workers of iniquity" (Luke xiii, 27). **They who fail to profess their Faith in the true Church**

in which they believe cannot expect to be saved while in that state, for Christ has said: "Whoever shall deny Me before men, I will also deny him before My Father, Who is in Heaven." *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

5. a) In the beginning when Anthony heard his wicked comrades ridicule his holy Faith, he became angry and openly defended God and His Church. That was praiseworthy and a duty on his part. But gradually he grew weaker, until at last he laughed too when he heard those impious conversations; yes, Anthony even took part in them himself. Thereby he dishonored God most shamefully; he neglected to take God's part, when he heard the great Lord of Heaven and earth blasphemed. What a terrible sin to allow others to heap ridicule and contempt upon God Almighty, when he might have stopped it! **We are obliged to make open profession of our Faith as often as God's honor requires it.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

b) Perhaps many a time, too, there were persons present in that company of Anthony's wicked comrades, who would have ceased their impious attacks on religion, if only Anthony had openly professed his esteem and reverence for the holy Gospel. For many a person would be ashamed to continue such wicked talk, if some one had the courage to tell him how wicked he is acting. Then too, perhaps, others were in danger of losing their Faith because of the bad example of these sinful companions. But if only Anthony had publicly encouraged or instructed these weak Christians, perhaps, they might have been preserved pure and unhurt by what they heard others saying. Anthony was bound in conscience to do that, if there were a well-grounded hope of preventing the spiritual harm of his neighbors. **We are obliged to make an open profession of our Faith as often as our neighbor's spiritual good requires it.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

c) Just see how Anthony's conduct hurt himself

in God's sight! Because he neglected openly to profess his Faith, he lost many a splendid opportunity for strengthening his own Faith. You know that practice makes perfect; neglect makes one weak. Then too, could anything tend more "to his spiritual good" than to openly defend the great God, when he heard the Lord's name and His holy teachings blasphemed? You see, therefore, that Anthony's own spiritual good required him to make an open profession of his Faith. And by neglecting to do that Anthony harmed his own soul most grievously. **We are obliged to make open profession of our Faith as often as our spiritual good requires it. "Whoever," says Christ, "shall confess Me before men, I will also confess him before My Father, Who is in Heaven."** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

1. c) The poor young man of our story had gone astray in the Faith; yes, he even took part in a Protestant service. He still wanted to be a Christian. He had some few sparks of the true Faith left yet, but he did not want to believe everything that God has taught. He made his religion according to his own mind, to suit himself. Whatever of the Christian Faith was to his liking he kept; whatever displeased him he threw aside. In many points of Faith he thought to himself: Surely that is not true, even though the Catholic Church does teach it. Thus gradually he became like a tree that is decaying: one limb after the other falls off, until finally the rotten trunk goes to pieces. The young man through his own fault had become a heretic. **A person sins against Faith by refusing to believe all that God has taught. 6. They who do not believe all that God has taught are heretics.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

From heresy to unbelief or infidelity it is often but a very short step. You can see that from the example of Anthony. At last he refused to believe anything at all: he did not believe any longer in God, in Christ, in eternal life. That was complete infidelity. **They who do**

not believe any of the doctrines that God has taught are infidels. *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*— If that young man had died in his sin, he would have to burn in eternal Hell-fire. For Christ Himself has said: "Whoever believeth not, is already judged" (John iii, 18). However, Anthony entered into himself and died in peace with God.

7. The first Commandment of God commands us to worship God by Faith. Consequently whoever sins against Faith sins also against the first Commandment of God. **Sins against Faith are also sins against the first Commandment.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

Write on the blackboard:

1 Sins against Faith—sins against the 1st Commandment. (7)

a) by neglecting to *know* (study) what God has taught.
by neglecting to know Christian Doctrine. (2)

b) by neglecting to *profess* one's Faith.
All failing to acknowledge true Church. (3)
Cannot hope to be saved in that state. (4)

c) by *refusing to believe* all that God has taught.
These are hertics—infidels. (6)

5. Duty of professing openly our Faith:
a) whenever God's honor; b) our neighbor's spiritual good; c) our own spiritual good demands it.

Synthesis. You have just now seen how a Christian can fall away from Faith and even become a perfect infidel. That young man sank by degrees more deeply into sins against Faith. How did the evil begin? What did he neglect to study? Then what kind of company did he keep? What sort of books did he read? What thoughts then came into his mind? Then he became careless in the practice of his religious duties. Did he neglect to profess his Faith? Can a person hope to be saved as long as he remains in that state? What does Christ say about such persons? Must we profess

our Faith openly? When? What does Christ say about this? Is it a sin to refuse to believe all that God has taught? What are such people called? Who is an infidel? Against what Commandment are all these sins? *(Have the pupils read the answers from the Catechism. Assign the lesson for the next class).*

Application. 1. "Resist the beginning," says an old proverb. If that young man had done that, he would not have gone so far astray. Wicked friends sowed the poisonous seeds in his heart. Beware of persons who ridicule the Faith! Just as wicked is the reading of bad books. Nowadays there is a regular deluge of bad books and newspapers. In them the devil preaches the finest sermon every day. And he has many zealous hearers, many more than the priest in the church. But he only chloroforms their consciences, in order that he may make them poor and weak in the Faith. What must one do? Cast aside all such writings! They poison the heart. You, too, can lose your Faith, this most precious jewel.

2. Doubts against Faith can come to anyone. In itself that is not a misfortune. If a bee alights upon your face, what do you do? Do you not chase it away at once? Otherwise it may sting you. Act in the same way when doubts come to you against your holy Faith. Chase away the doubt from your heart, otherwise it might wound your soul. Pray at once as that young man did on his death-bed: "O my God! I believe all that the Church teaches. In this Faith will I live and die. O Lord! increase my Faith." Often awaken the virtue of Faith by such acts, so that it may not go to sleep in your hearts.—Many people do not believe, because they are poorly instructed in the Faith. Inform yourselves thoroughly in the Faith by studying your Christian Doctrine well; and if you do not understand some doctrine, ask for instruction.

3. It is not necessary to proclaim openly in the streets that we are Catholics. Neither do we have to tell our religion to impudent people, that they may have

a chance to insult us. But if there is a real need of professing our Faith, we must profess it openly. If you happen to be staying at a hotel, in which you are the only Catholic and flesh-meat is placed before you on a Friday, you must quietly push it aside and ask for fish or other food. God's honor and your own good require it. Or if you chance to be in the same hotel with indifferent Catholics, who through human respect are ashamed to go to Mass on a Sunday, you must publicly go to Mass, for by so doing you encourage these lukewarm Catholics to follow your good example. Your neighbor's good requires it. But if there happens to be question of something that God or the Church does not command, but only recommends, such as blessing yourself before meals or some other pious practice, you could omit that in public, if you so pleased, because that could not be against any Commandment.

4. Who is an infidel?—Infidelity is a great misfortune; for without Faith there is no Heaven. But surely many heathens have gone to Heaven. How can that be?—The heathens, too, hear God's voice in their hearts. If they obey that voice, they can obtain salvation. No one is lost except through one's own fault. —There are infidels even among Christians. Whence comes unbelief? Surely not from being wise and learned, but rather from being proud or from being wicked.

5. Who is a heretic?—Are you allowed to attend a Protestant service?—No. May you without denying your Faith be present at the funeral or marriage of a Protestant?—Yes.—Protestants are heretics. But to be a Protestant is not of itself a sin. For most of them are in error through no fault of their own, and believe that they are in the right. But whoever knows the truth and refuses to believe it, cannot obtain Heaven. But to be a Catholic is a great blessing. Thank God for that every day and be a real good Catholic! "Thanks be to God, that I am a Catholic!"

LESSON VIII.

Sins Against Hope.

Catechetical Unit:

1) What is presumption? L. XXX, Q. 328.
2) What is despair? L. XXX, Q. 329.
3) Which are the sins against hope? L. XXX, Q. 327.
4) Are sins against hope also sins against the first Commandment? L. XXX, Q. 320 (second part).

Preparation. Dear children, to please God and to save our immortal souls we must possess Divine Faith in our hearts and practice that virtue in our daily lives. That is the reason why the Holy Ghost gave us that precious treasure. But it is also possible to sin against Divine Faith. Let us first review the lesson on these sins. *(Question the pupils briefly on the foregoing lesson).*—The Holy Ghost has also planted Hope in our hearts at our Baptism. Men hope for many things. What do children hope for at Christmas?—They rejoice over the coming of the Christ Child. They begin very early to count the days and can scarcely wait until He comes. Do you see? To hope means to expect something good. What does a sick man hope for?—What do father and mother hope for from their children?—What do all Christians hope for?—We hope for the greatest good, for Heaven. Yes, *Heaven is our hope.* Therefore a true Christian loves even now to be in Heaven in his thoughts. It is with him as with the birds that migrate to warmer countries in the autumn. When the weather gradually grows dreary and cold in our country, these birds are no longer at rest; there is something that inclines and impels them to leave for a better home. So the pious Christian, too, does not find rest and peace in this world; hope and longing draw him heavenwards, where our eternal home is.—But how can we poor sinners hope for Heaven?—It is

true, that we are not deserving of Heaven. But God is merciful and wants to pardon us and give us Heaven. That is our hope.—*We ought to hope from God pardon of our sins, His grace and life everlasting. (Repeat together).*

To be sure, that is a great deal, but it is not too much. God *can* give us all that; for He is almighty. God *wants* to give us all that; for He is merciful. God *will* give us that; for He is faithful to His promises. Yes, we even have a right to all that. Why?—Jesus merited all that for us on the Cross. Then besides He gave us a pledge, a guarantee, namely Holy Communion. "Holy Communion is a pledge of our future resurrection and eternal happiness," as our Catechism tells us.—We may and ought to hope for the forgiveness of our sins, divine grace and life everlasting, because the all powerful, the all merciful and faithful God has promised it, and Jesus Christ has merited it for us.

We may also hope for temporal things or blessings. Why—Jesus Himself has taught us to pray: "Give us this day our daily bread!" "Be not solicitous, saying: What shall we eat, or what shall we drink, or wherewith shall we be clothed?" (Matt. vi, 31). Therefore we may hope for temporal and for eternal blessings, for the gifts of earth and the gifts of Heaven.

Aim. But there are Christians, who hope too much and too little and sin grievously. That is what we are to learn today: *about the sins against Christian Hope.*

Presentation. Voltaire was a bitter enemy of God. He cherished a truly devilish hatred against the Christian Faith and the Church. Once he fell into disfavor with the King. Now just listen how the old sinner acted, in order to get back into the good graces of his sovereign.

It just happened to be Holy Week. Therefore he sent for a priest, in order to make his Easter confession. On Easter Sunday morning he arranged with his friends to make a solemn visit to the church. During the divine service he conducted himself in a very

edifying manner; he appeared to be sorry for his sins and received Holy Communion. After the service he returned in procession to his home. But all this was merely an outward show. The following year this miserable hypocrite acted even more wickedly. He went to bed, pretending that he was sick, and called for a priest. He said to the priest: "Easter is at hand. I want to perform my duty as a Christian. Unfortunately I am too ill to go to church. Therefore I beg you to hear my confession here." The priest knew the old sinner and refused to comply with this request. However, Voltaire continued to urge, pretending that he was in danger of death. After a few days he actually received Holy Communion again. But hardly had the priest gone away, when the blasphemer arose from bed and began to ridicule the Blessed Sacrament, and went out into the garden for a walk.

However, God will not be mocked. Punishment soon came upon Voltaire. Nine years later the wicked sinner really was at the point of death. He lay unconscious upon his bed. Suddenly he awoke. "I am abandoned by God and men!" he cried out in despair. And to those who stood at his bedside he shouted: "Away, away from me! You are to blame that I must die like this!" Then he tossed himself again in fear and agony upon his bed, uttering the name of God now in complaint, now in ridicule. In terror his friends stood by and noticed how he cried out in a voice hardly audible for chokes and sobs: "Jesus Christ! Jesus Christ!" One of his friends left the room with the words: "Really, this is too much; no one can stand this!"

The terrible drama continued. The dying man writhed like a worm, that is being stepped upon, and tore his flesh with his own nails. He called for a priest; but his friends remained as hard as a stone. Now the final moment was at hand. Beside himself with despair the dying man cried out: "I feel a hand, that grasps me and drags me to the judgment-seat of God!" Then with staring eyes he gazed before him

and cried out: "The devil is there. He wants to seize me! I see Hell. Oh! Hide it from me." One more terrible cry,—and he fell back dead. Some of the eye-witnesses, who later on became converted, declared: "If the devil could die, he would not have ended differently."

Explanation. 1. Would one of you like to die like that? The very thought of it is enough to make one tremble with terror. But how can a person fall so deeply?—Even in his youth Voltaire was a very easy going fellow. He liked to laugh at sacred things in the company of others. But it is a bad sign to scoff at religion. The older this sinner became, the more grievous did his sins become. What wickedness did this old sinner commit?—This Judas soul twice received Holy Communion out of pure ridicule. That was devilish malice. This is indeed making malicious sport of God and one's own poor soul. Of course his own conscience had warned him, saying: "Turn back, you wicked sinner, or else it will be too late! God's anger will strike you." Even his own Bishop wrote him a fatherly letter: "Time presses. A shriveled up body bending beneath the weight of years warns you to think of your last hour." But the hardened sinner listened neither to the voice of conscience nor to the voice of his Bishop. He thought most probably like many an old sinner: "Oh! It is time enough to be converted when the hour of death comes. If there really is a God, He is merciful; He will not damn me!"

But really, is not God merciful?—Yes, God is infinitely merciful. Great as the ocean is His mercy. There is no end to His mercy, if the sinner sincerely wishes to be converted and to better himself. But is God merciful to the unrepentant sinner?—No, God never said that. On the contrary God threatened the unrepentant sinner with eternal perdition.—The old sinner, Voltaire, was therefore absolutely in the wrong. He measured the mercy of God in a very wrong way; he hoped *too much* from God—he presumed. He rashly expected salvation

without making use of the means that are required to attain it. **Presumption is a rash expectation of salvation without making the proper use of the necessary means to attain it.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard; see the diagram below just above the synthesis).* We may hope only for what God has promised. Where there is no conversion, there is no pardon either.

2. For every man at some time or other the last hour will come. There is no medicine in all the wide world against death. Voltaire, too, had to die. But how did he die?—One can think of it only with terror. He became sick unto death and he realized: Now the end is at hand! Suddenly his conscience awakened. Once more the grace of God knocked at this sinner's heart: There is time yet, but it is high time! But all in vain. Suddenly the old sinner was like a changed man. Before he had hoped too much; now he hoped *too little.* The death agony entered into his soul like a fiery serpent, and left him without rest and peace day and night. The dying man looked back over his past life. And what did he see?—Sins and nothing but sins. He was afraid of himself: "Oh, what have I done! Can God still pardon me? Is there still mercy for me?" Such doubts tortured his soul unceasingly. Do you know this man?—He had no confidence in God. How ought that dying man to have thought to himself?—I am a great sinner; but God's mercy is greater. However, now he thought only of his sins and no longer of the mercy of God. Finally Satan came to him and whispered into his heart: "God has abandoned you; for you there is no more hope!" Soon the tempter had won his game. Twice more the dying man uttered the name of Jesus Christ; but that was not trust and hope, but rather despair. Just a few moments more and his soul went down into Hell. As a man lives, so generally does he die, and so too he remains for all eternity. **Despair is the loss of hope in God's mercy.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

It is a frightful sin to despair. Would it really have

been impossible to help this poor sinner any more?—As long as man lives he is not lost; no sinner is excluded entirely from the grace of God. Did not Christ pardon also the thief on the cross? The wicked scoundrel, Voltaire, ought to have repented of his sinful life and prayed with confidence and hope: "O God, be merciful to me, a sinner!" Then he could have saved his poor soul even at the last moment. "What a spark of fire is to the ocean, that the wickedness of man is as compared with the mercy of God," says St. Chrysostom.

3. Voltaire sinned against the Divine virtue of Hope in two ways, as we have just seen: he hoped too much—he presumed; and he hoped too little; in fact he lost all hope—he despaired. He sinned, therefore, by presumption and despair. **The sins against hope are presumption and despair.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

4. If this sinner had only trusted in God as a child trusts lovingly in its father, he surely would have pleased God and saved his poor soul. You recall what our Catechism says: To save our souls we must worship God by Faith, Hope and Charity. We adore God by Faith, Hope and Charity. That is precisely what God commands us by the first Commandment. Consequently if we sin against Hope, we sin also against the first Commandment of God. **Sins against hope are also sins against the first Commandment.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

Write on the blackboard:

Sins against Hope—Sins against 1st Commandment (4).

1) Presumption—to hope too much.

2) Despair—to hope too little or to lose all hope.

Synthesis. Christian Hope is a gift of God, a precious present of Heaven. What ought we to hope from God? Why ought we to hope for everything? May we also hope for temporal blessings? Which is the first sin that Voltaire committed against hope? the

second sin? Which are the sins against Hope? Are such sins also against the first Commandment? *(Have the pupils read the answers from the Catechism. Assign the lesson for the next class).*

Application. Hope keeps the Christian upright. Without hope of Heaven our life would indeed be without true joy. But many sins are committed against hope. Some people hope too much, others too little, while others lose all hope.

1. *Whoever hopes too much sins by presumption.* —Do you know an example in this regard?—In the days of Noe the malice of men became great; their sins cried to Heaven for vengeance. When Noe announced to them the approach of God's judgment and punishment they laughed at him and ridiculed him. They thought to themselves: Even though God does threaten, He is not really in earnest. But matters really did become serious; the punishment of God came upon them.

(A certain young man lived a careless life of sinful pleasure day after day. He heard the voice of God in his heart: Begin a new life! However, the easy going fellow always said: "Tomorrow is time enough!" Then he died suddenly. Soon afterwards he appeared to one of his friends and cried out in tones that made that friend's heart tremble with terror: "O tomorrow! accursed tomorrow. Thou hast cast me into Hell." Do you see the punishment of presumption?—A young criminal was confined in a prison at Paris. A priest visited him and exhorted him to confess his sins. "I shall wait until next Easter," was his answer. The following morning the priest came again. The prisoner was in bed. The priest was surprised at this. The Sister of Mercy was of the opinion that there was no danger, for this young man had only a headache. The priest approached the sick man and asked him how he felt. No reply—the convict was dead. He had died unprepared in the midst of his sins. His penance had been postponed and had become impossible forever).

2. *Whoever hopes too little is also guilty of a sin against Hope and the first Commandment.* — Many people sin in this way. Even Moses sinned in that regard. God said to him: "Strike with thy rod on that rock and the water will flow." Moses doubted that God would really work such a great miracle for His ungrateful people.—The people of Israel had repeatedly sinned against God by murmuring against Him. That was sinful mistrust of God. Oftentimes one hears people complaining: "I believe that God has deserted me entirely." No, God thinks of you. God abandons no man, who does not first abandon Him. Therefore trust in God and let Him rule! Another person sighs: "Oh! if only I could die. My whole life is distasteful to me." May a person pray for death? St. Paul prayed: "I desire to be dissolved and to be with Christ" (Phil. i, 23). Yes, that is Christian. But to wish for death out of discontent, that is pagan; back of such a desire there lurks a distrust in God. A pious Christian does not permit the tiniest spark of mistrust to arise in his heart. He looks upwards and thinks to himself: God knows it. He will not desert me! Then at death we can pray with confidence as did St. Francis Xavier: "In Thee, O Lord, have I hoped; I shall not be confounded forever" (Ps. xxx, 2).

3. *Whoever does not hope at all, sins by despair.*— To despair is the sin of Judas. What did the unhappy betrayer of our Lord think in his heart after his sin? St. Augustine says: "Judas went to eternal perdition, not so much on account of his crime, but rather because he despaired." Cain acted in precisely the same manner. Despair is often the terrible ending of a long life of sin. We saw that in the case of Voltaire.

4. You children do not as yet know much about the cares and trials of life. You all hope for a long life as beautiful as a lovely day in May. But I wonder whether that is not merely like a sweet dream?

The future is still hid from you, as it were, by a thick curtain. What if you were allowed to look behind that curtain? Perhaps much misery and bitter poverty is waiting for many of you. Other persons get sick and wither away like the flowers in the autumn. I am afraid that many a one will go astray on the ways of sin. Then sometimes Satan comes and begins to inject like hellish poison the thought into such a person's mind: "You cannot stand such a life!" But, dear children, come whatever may, you must never lose confidence in God. Only no mistrust or despair! God still lives! You are in God's hands. "Whoever trusts in God has built upon a firm foundation." Christian Hope points heavenwards. Let us then make an act of Hope together: "O my God! relying on Thy infinite promises, I hope to obtain pardon for my sins, the help of Thy grace, and life everlasting, through the merits of Jesus Christ, my Lord and Redeemer. Amen."

LESSON IX.

Sins Against Charity.

Catechetical Unit:

1) How do we sin against the love of God? L. XXX, Q. 330.

2) Are sins against charity also sins against the first Commandment? L. XXX, Q. 320 (third part).

Preparation. Dear children, a certain business man came into great straits. He complained bitterly about his misery. His entire life became distasteful to him. But his wife had a pious, Christian mind and heart; therefore she tried to console her husband and to cheer him up. But all was in vain.—Once this woman, too, sat there sad and disconsolate and did not

want to eat even. Her husband asked her what the trouble was. At first his wife did not want to answer at all. Finally she said: "Last night I dreamed that our Blessed Lord had died and all the angels went along with the funeral and wept most bitterly. That almost broke my heart, and I am still very sad over it." "Nonsense!" said her husband. "Can God die?" Then the face of this woman became cheerful again, and looking kindly into the eyes of her husband, she said: "Therefore He still lives, the good God?" "Yes, of course God still lives; how can you talk so childishly?" Then the woman said very seriously: "But if the good God still lives, why have you no longer any confidence in Him?" Thereupon this man's eyes were opened again and he said: "Yes, dear wife, you are right. You are more sensible and Christian than I. From now on I will trust in God." We learned in the last lesson about the sins against Hope. Let us first review this lesson. *(Question the pupils briefly on the preceding lesson).*

We ought to believe in God, hope in Him and love Him above all things. St. Paul was a hero of the love of God. We have learned much from his example. Let us see how much you remember. When do we love God above all things? Why should we love God above all things? How do we show our love for God? What is Charity?—But there are people, to whom everything in the world is dearer than the Lord God.

Aim: That is what I am going to show you today: *how a Christian can sin grievously against the love of God.*

Presentation. Once there was a certain mother, who troubled herself very little about God and her poor soul. She was really a genuine worldling. This mother had an only child, a little son. Now it happened that this child was taken sick. The sickness continually grew worse. Soon it became very clear that it was impossible to help that child any more. From the first moment the mother fell into a terrible

anger and fear. But when the illness brought death near she became crazed with despair; for that child was dearer to her than the whole world, yes, dearer to her than the Lord God Himself.

When the priest had heard about this, he went into the home of the mother, in order to speak words of comfort and resignation in her trouble. But all was useless. Then he tried another means. He stood beside the bed of the sick child and prayed aloud: "Lord! if it be Thy will, restore to this sick child life and health." The mother heard this prayer and wildly interrupted him, saying, "No, not if it is Thy will! It must be Thy will. God may not let my child be taken from me by death." The priest was frightened at these words and left the house.

But see, contrary to all human reckoning and to the boundless joy of the mother, the child arose from its bed of sickness, became well and grew up. He became big and strong in body—and in wickedness. That boy caused his mother year by year more trouble and heartache. Finally that poor mother had to live to see her son convicted of a capital crime. He was scarcely twenty years old when they led him out of that little town. The prison bell sent forth its woeful tones as he was being taken away to execution. That was the sad end of this child, that the mother was unwilling to let die at any price. (A. Stolz).

Explanation. 1. Can there be any greater sorrow for a mother than that sorrow which we have just described? But God's punishment was well deserved. See, this foolish mother worshipped her child almost like an idol. Yes, that child was her all; he was dearer to her than the Lord God Himself. Therefore the mother troubled herself very little about God and her soul. I can easily imagine how she acted. She had no real love for prayer; now and then a few Our Fathers, that was all that she prayed. On Sundays she went to church only rarely. She took no time for that duty; for to her everything else was more im-

portant than attendance at the divine services. And when she did go to church now and then, she was always late. She did as many distinguished people do—she came each time just at the Consecration. She did not hear the word of God the whole year. "To listen to a sermon—Oh! that is too monotonous for me. And after all I do not need it; for I already know all about it." The fast-days she could not bear at all. "I keep the principal fast-days; that is enough for me." If a beggar came to her door, she would immediately get angry and scold, saying: "This lazy beggar crowd!" The Easter season was for her the most distasteful time of the entire year. And why?—"I really do not know what to confess," she would say to herself. "I am a good respectable woman; no one can say anything bad about me." However, since it was the custom, she also went to confession like other people. Of course, she was finished very quickly, and then she was heartily glad that it was over. "Now, I will have rest for another year!" That is what she said to herself.

To pray, to assist at the divine services, to give alms, to go to Confession and Holy Communion, to faithfully observe God's Commandments—these are sacred and divine things; for they belong to God and God is pleased with them. But that woman was most *indifferent* towards these holy and divine things. She preferred everything else to them. What do you think of such a Christian?—This mother had not the faintest spark of true love for God in her heart. Such careless and indifferent conduct is a sin against the Divine Virtue of Charity. What will God say of such a life?—I know what He will say, for He Himself has told us in the Holy Scriptures: "Because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will begin to vomit thee out of My mouth" (Apoc. iii, 15). Do you understand those words?—If you drink lukewarm water, how do you feel? Does it not sicken you, and do you not want to spit it out again immediately? So the

good God feels, when he sees a careless and indifferent Christian. He has a hatred, an aversion, for such a person. Can that be a small sin?

But, dear children, this mother was not only careless and indifferent in the service of God. She also committed *many sins, venial and mortal,* by breaking God's holy Commandments. Do you think that God was pleased with such conduct?—Does a child really love its parents, if it disobeys their commands? If it does those very things which displease and seriously offend its dear parents in the most shameful manner? —Your own heart tells you the answer. How then do we sin against Charity? **We sin against the love of God by all sin, but particularly by mortal sin.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard; see the diagram below just above the synthesis).*

2. Now let me show you some *more sins that are directly against the love of God.* A true Christian must be zealous for God and Divine things. But more than that. Whoever has genuine love for God in his heart will think and pray in all things that happen to him: "Thy will be done!" A person that has no love will only say: "My will be done!" We see that in the case of the mother of our story. God sent a visitation upon her and allowed her only child to become sick unto death. How ought this mother to have spoken? —"As God wills! In all things may His holy will be done!" That is what St. Elizabeth did, when her beloved husband died. For she was indeed a true disciple of the Lord and knew: "God means well with us, His children, even though He hurts us. What God does is well done." In her heart burned, in times of good fortune as well as in times of misfortune, the pure and holy fire of the love of God like the little red light, that burns perpetually before the Tabernacle. *To resign oneself to God's holy Will*—that is true love of God.

See, the good Lord God disposes everything in our life; for He is truly the best of Fathers. Even when He

sends misfortunes, sickness, poverty, all that is only a sign of His fatherly Providence. We must humbly submit ourselves to His designs and say: "God wills it!" But how did that unchristian mother act?—She was unwilling to resign herself to God's will, but rather cried out wildly: "God may not allow my child to die!" How is it possible for a person to speak so wickedly and in such an unchristian manner! The woman was very angry and excited against God; she had an aversion to His fatherly plans. That is even a greater sin against the love of God. *We sin against the love of God by having an aversion to God and divine things. (Repeat together).*

But sometimes God cannot punish a person more severely than by letting him have his own will. The heavenly Father let that mother have her will and allowed her child to get well again. You tell me yourselves: Was not that the greatest punishment for that unhappy mother?—I believe that that mother felt sorry a thousand times for her sin, and wept and wished that her only child had died! For there can be no greater sorrow and disgrace for a mother's heart than to have to live to see her own son led away to execution as a criminal.

3. But it is possible to act even more wickedly than did this mother. Do you know what the devils do in Hell? They curse and blaspheme against God; yes, they would even cast Him down from His throne, if they were able. But there are also men, who are real devils. In the last class we saw such a monster of a man.—Voltaire was an enemy of God. Throughout his whole life he had labored with truly devilish malice against Christ and His holy Church. This hatred of God is a frightful sin. He has long ago received his reward. Now he must "drink of the wine of the wrath of God and shall be tormented with fire and brimstone" (Apoc. xix, 10). *We sin against the love of God by hatred and repugance to Him and to His paternal dispensations. (Repeat together).*

4. The first Commandment of God, as we have seen, commands us to worship God by Faith, Hope and Charity. Whoever, therefore, sins against Charity, sins also against the first Commandment. **Sins against Charity are also sins against the first Commandment.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

Write on the blackboard:

1. Sins against the love of God—Sins against the first Commandment (2).—All sins, especially all mortal sins.

Synthesis. A good child will not cause sorrow to its father even in little things. Whoever heartily loves his Father in Heaven will not offend Him even in slight matters. For every sin, even the smallest, is against the love of God. How do we sin against the love of God? There are two kinds of sins, that are more especially against the love of God. Do you know them? Are sins against the love of God also sins against the first Commandment? *(Have the children read the answers from the Catechism. Assign the lesson for the next class. Add also the questions about charity).*

Application. 1. Many Christians act just as did that poor mother. They are most solicitous about all sorts of things, but they do not trouble themselves at all about God and Divine things. Yes, to some children there is nothing so distasteful as to pray and to go to church. And if one warns and admonishes them, they answer at once: "Oh! I can tell that in Confession." Do you want to know where such a careless and indifferent Christian life leads?—St. Theresa in her young days was also for a time a worldling. She lived in a careless manner from day to day and had no pleasure in God and Divine things. Later on she was permitted to look into Hell. This Saint tells us herself about this. "It lasted for only a few moments, and yet, I shall never forget it in all my life. What

I felt at that time is not to be described nor imagined. My soul was as if in the death struggle. This agony, this dying, this breaking of my heart, this unheard of, despairing, bitter sadness—for all this I cannot find words."—Do you perhaps wish some day to see this place of torments? If not, away with this carelessness and indifference in matters of religion! God cannot bear a lukewarm person. Whoever has no pleasure in religion, cannot be pleasing to God either. Avoid all sin, venial and especially mortal sins.

2. A true Christian ought to be the image of Christ. That mother was not such an image. While in the garden of Olives Christ prayed three times when He saw the chalice of sufferings: "Father! not My will but Thine be done." That is how every Christian ought to pray in sufferings. But many persons complain against God immediately and say: "Must everything come upon me? How did I deserve that? Is there no God in Heaven any more?" Such unchristian and pagan complaining is a big sin. Do you still remember how God punished the Israelites in the desert for their murmuring and complaining?—

3. Now just ask your own hearts: Have you ever had aversion to God, when things did not go according to your liking? Many a child says: Why does God always send such bad weather? Why must just I always get sick? Why do things always go better with other children than with me? Have you perhaps ever spoken like that?—Do not do it any more! God knows best of all, why He does things just in this or that way. You ought to accept every suffering gladly and thankfully. Then at some time or other every suffering you endure will sparkle like a precious jewel in your heavenly crown. Therefore often excite in yourselves a hearty act of love: "O my God! I love Thee above all things with my whole heart and soul, because Thou art all-good and worthy of my love. I love my neighbor as myself for the love of Thee. I forgive all who have injured me, and I ask pardon of all whom I have in-

jured." Or say this short prayer: "Jesus, my God, I love Thee above all things!" (50 days' Indulgence). "O Jesus! help me never to offend Thee by sin."

LESSON X.

Idolatry and False Worship.

Catechetical Unit:

How may the first Commandment be broken? L. XXX, Q. 318.

Preparation. Dear children, our Blessed Saviour says to each one of us: "If you love Me, keep My Commandments" (John xiv, 15). If we break any one of God's Commandments, therefore, we prove that we do not really love Him. In the last lesson we learned how we can sin against the love of God. Let us first review this lesson. *(Question the pupils briefly on the preceding lesson).*—The first Commandment of God commands us to worship God. The pagans, who have not the true faith, do not worship the true God either; they adore false gods or idols. And they do that oftentimes in a very strange manner. The Indians of our own country used to be heathens and some of them are still heathens.

Aim. Today I am going to speak to you about the religion of these poor Indians. Then you will understand how they broke the first Commandment of God. They committed *idolatry and false worship.*

Presentation. When Christopher Columbus came to America over four hundred years ago, red-skinned Indian tribes lived here. They were all pagans, who had never heard of Jesus Christ and His holy Church. Catholic missionaries went among them and lived with them. They told us about the life and the religion of

these poor pagans. The Indians were very religious in their own way. They believed in the "Great Spirit," Who rules all things and directs all the important events of the world. They imagined that the "Great Spirit" lived especially in the sun and, therefore, they paid special honor to the sun. They used to pray to the sun. When two Indian tribes, that had been enemies, made peace with each other, they lighted the pipe of peace as a sign that they were no longer enemies. But the first puffs of the pipe of peace they offered to the sun and blew the first smoke towards the sun. However, the "Great Spirit" was not the only one that they adored. They prayed to a whole army of gods or spirits. The Indians believed that there were spirits everywhere, in the forests in which they lived, in the plains, upon which they hunted, in the rivers, in which they swam. There were spirits in the rocks, in the trees, in the clouds, in the frost, in the stars—everywhere. Many of these spirits were supposed to be wicked. To keep these evil spirits from harming them the Indians made use of a "medicine" or a charm. Sometimes these poor heathens would fast and do all sorts of hard penances and then go to sleep. They believed that the animal or plant that appeared to them in their dreams was a medicine or a charm against evil spirits. Thus if they saw a buffalo, or a rattlesnake, or an eagle, or some plant, in their sleep they looked upon that animal or plant as sacred and would not kill it or allow anyone else to harm it. In every tribe there were certain men, called medicine-men, who were supposed to be powerful in driving away evil spirits and in telling the hidden things of the future. The Indians spent a great part of their life in trying to make friends of the evil spirits, so that they would not harm them. Anything out of the ordinary, an eclipse of the sun or the moon, thunder and lightning, filled them with fear and dread.

The Indians offered sacrifices to their false gods. Yes, sometimes even men and little infants were

offered in sacrifice to their idols. For instance, the Indians of Central America used to offer their prisoners to the sun-god. They bound these poor unfortunates, hand and foot, and placed them upon a pile of burning wood. When the poor creatures were nearly dead, the Indians would drag the bodies of these victims to the steps of their temples and one of the priests would tear out the heart of these poor men and offer it to the sun-god. What a horrible and cruel religion! Yes, some Indian tribes of Florida, Mississippi and California would even eat the flesh of their prisoners, foolishly believing that by so doing the bravery of their victims would become their own.

But this is enough. Catholic missionaries went among these savage tribes and taught them the Christian religion. And many of these brave missionaries were martyred for the Faith, but they succeeded in driving away this false worship and idolatry and brought instead the true religion of Christ and His holy Church.

Explanation. 1. a) There is a great difference between Christianity and paganism. Christians adore the one true God, the Creator of heaven and earth. But the pagans, like the Indians I have just spoken about, adore false gods or idols. These heathens believed that there were more gods than one, and they thought that these gods were wicked spirts. The manner in which they adored these idols was indeed most terrible. They offererd animals, yes even men, in sacrifice to these false gods. Of course that was a grievous sin, a detestable act, in God's sight. It was a sin against the fifth Commandment of God: "Thou shalt not kill!" But the pagan religion did not teach this Commandment. As among the Indians so the worship of idols was found also among other heathen peoples. For instance, the people of Egypt adored the bull (Apis). They took special care of this animal and built a temple in its honor. The most distinguished people of Egypt used to go to this temple, in order to offer sacri-

fice to this false god. In India the heathens adored the fire, because they considered it to be their god. Other pagan nations worshiped the sun and the moon. You see, therefore, all these people gave the honor that belongs to the one true God to a mere creature. They worshiped creatures and forgot the Creator. They committed the sin of idolatry. Idolatry is a sin against the first Commandment of God. **The first Commandment may be broken by giving to a creature the honor that belongs to God alone.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard; see the diagram below just above the synthesis).*

(The people not only refused to honor and worship God as He deserves to be honored and worshiped, but they had also to *suffer severely under paganism.* The Norwegians lived mostly by robbing vessels at sea, that is by piracy. They were fierce and savage. We see that from the fact that at times they would set fire to a house so that all in that house would perish in the flames. Children, too, who no longer pleased their father, were exposed to death. For instance, if a father wanted a son, and instead a daughter was born to him, he would kill that little baby girl. If a mother died in Greenland, her child was buried alive with her. Slaves were harnessed to the plow, and their masters could kill these poor creatures at will. That is how things were under paganism. But ever since Christianity has been introduced into the world, such horrible crimes do not occur any longer. Parents now love their children and have the duty of educating them as the Christian religion teaches. Parents must make many sacrifices for their children, and they do so gladly. All this is due to the Christian religion. Now no one may be killed any more, and instead of murder and robbery the people support themselves by honorable work. Life has become more beautiful through Christianity; now no one is in danger of losing his life or his property. Thanks be to God, that He has given to men such a beautiful religion; that paganism is dis-

appearing more and more. *We must thank God for the grace of our holy religion.* Sometimes religion demands hard things of us, but surely it is easier for you to keep God's Commandments than to endure the horrors of paganism).

b) When the Catholic missionaries came among the pagan Indians, they were sorely grieved at the wicked and detestable worship which they saw these heathens practising. What kind of religion did the Indians practise?—Yes, they thought that by offering animals, and even men, in sacrifice to their idols, they were honoring God as they ought. How that must have hurt the heart of these pious missionaries! Was that the kind of worship that God demanded?—No, indeed; that was a false worship. Such detestable acts of religion could not please God Almighty. Then again, how foolish of the Indians to believe, that by eating the flesh of their enemies they would be able to make the bravery of these poor creatures their own! Really one does not know whether to laugh or to weep over the many silly prayers and ceremonies, that these poor ignorant people made use of in their religion. Do you think that such wicked acts were pleasing to the Lord God?—These pagans were worshiping their idols according to their own wicked hearts. They were not practising religion according as God commanded or His holy Church prescribed. They were offering a false worship; and that is a sin against the first Commandment. **The first Commandment may be broken by false worship.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

You see, therefore, that according to God's Commandment we must worship God as He wills, and not as we will or as our wicked passions dictate. God's holy Church tells us in detail how to worship the Lord God. She speaks to us in His name. In the Old Testament God instructed the Jews by the mouth of Moses as to how they were to practise religion. He told them in detail all about the priests, the altar, the sacrifices, and the prayers they were to make use of. But when

Jesus Christ came into the world He did away with the Old Testament worship and instituted a new kind of worship. Now there is but one true Sacrifice that is pleasing to God. What is it?—His Church tells us that we must adore God by Faith, Hope and Charity, by prayer and sacrifice. To make use of any other kind of worship would be practising a false religion and a sin against the first Commandment.

c) The pagan Indians broke the first Commandment not only by idolatry and false worship, but also by certain other foolish religious practices, which we call *"superstition."* All pagans are superstitious. I just told you how the Indians believed that the animals or plants, which they dreamed about, were a medicine or a charm against evil spirits. How nonsensical? A buffalo, or a rattlesnake, or an eagle, or a plant, has no power against evil spirits. That is superstition. If a person makes use of certain things, which have no power of themselves, and believes that they will help him, he is guilty of superstition. And that is also a sin against the first Commandment. Christian Faith is a virtue, whereas superstition is a sin. Only Christ and His holy grace is powerful against evil spirits. Christ has told us plainly through His holy Church how we can overcome evil spirits. The Indians gave or attributed to mere creatures a perfection, which belongs to God alone. They committed the sin of superstition. Then again how foolish to imagine that by eating the flesh of their enemies they could be just as brave as they were! That is superstition. The medicine men, who made use of all sorts of foolish ceremonies to foretell the hidden things of the future, were guilty of superstition. They claimed to have a power, which really belongs to God alone. That too is a sin against the first Commandment. **The first Commandment may be broken by attributing to a creature perfections that belong to God alone.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*—There are many ways in

which a person may be guilty of superstition. In the next class I shall speak to you more in detail about this.

Write on the blackboard:

Sins against the first Commandment:

a) giving honor to a creature, that belongs to God alone (idolatry);

b) false worship;

c) attributing to a creature perfections that belong to God alone (superstition).

Synthesis. Catholic missionaries labored among the many Indian tribes of our country. They saw that these poor creatures were guilty of idolatry, false worship and superstition. What honor did the pagan Indians pay to creatures? What do you call that? Is it a sin against the first Commandment? How did they worship their gods? What do you call this kind of worship? Against what Commandment is that? What else did they do? What do you call such practises? Are they against the first Commandment? *(Have the pupils read the answer from the Catechism. Assign the lesson for the next class).*

Application. 1. In the heathen temple of the Babylonians there stood a certain statue, which was called Bel. This statue was held in high esteem by these heathens. They even believed that it was alive and could eat and drink. Therefore each day they offered it flour, sheep and wine. Yes, even the King worshiped this idol and went daily to the temple to adore this false god. But the Prophet Daniel worshiped only the one true God. Consequently the King once said to Daniel: "Why do you not adore Bel?" Daniel answered: "Because I do not adore an idol, that is made by the hand of men. I adore only the living God, Who has created Heaven and earth and Who is the Lord of all that lives." The King answered: "Do you think that Bel is not a living god? Do you not see how he eats and drinks every day?" Daniel replied with a smile: "Do

not let yourself be deceived, O King! He never ate anything." Then Daniel went into the temple with the King. The King himself placed the food on the altar before the idol. But Daniel commanded his servants to bring ashes, which he strewed about upon the floor of the temple by means of a sieve in the sight of the King. Then they both left the temple, closed the doors and sealed them with the King's seal.

Early the next morning the King went to the temple together with Daniel. But as soon as the doors were opened, the King looked at the altar and cried out with a loud voice: "O Bel! thou art great, and in thee there is no deception or fraud." For really all the food had been eaten. Daniel smiled and kept the King from entering the temple, and said: "Just look around a little upon the floor, and see what footsteps there are here upon the floor." The King replied: "I see the footsteps of men and women and children." They were the footprints of the pagan priests and their wives and children. The King and Daniel then looked carefully about and discovered under the altar a secret door. The priests and the rest used to come into the temple through this door every night and eat up all the food that was on the altar. In punishment for their acts the King ordered all of them to be put to death. The idol, Bel, the King gave to Daniel, who destroyed it and demolished the temple.

2. There is, of course, no danger that you will be led to commit idolatry, as did the heathens of old. And yet, there is a certain kind of idolatry, which you may be tempted to commit. For instance, here is a man, who likes a certain person very much. But he knows that for him that particular person is an occasion of sin; that unless he avoids that person, he will surely offend God by sin, and perhaps in the end lose his own soul. Nevertheless he refuses to avoid the company of that person. Thereby he shows that he loves that person more than God. Is not that giving to a creature the honor that belongs to God alone? Yes, we can rightly

say, that with every mortal sin there is connected a kind of idolatry, for a person who commits mortal sin really loves a creature more than he loves God Himself, and serves that creature instead of serving God. Therefore you see what wickedness there is in every mortal sin. Resolve to avoid every mortal sin as you would the devil himself.

3. We must worship God in the way He has prescribed. Therefore a person would be guilty of false worship, if he attended and took part in service in a Protestant or non-Catholic church. Of course, it would not be false worship to attend a funeral in a Protestant church out of courtesy or friendship, provided one did not take part in the services.—Moreover, dear children, when you perform some outward devotion in the church or elsewhere, you ought to think of what you are doing. The ceremonies we perform should express the feelings of our minds and hearts. Hence he who kneels down, folds his hands, strikes his breast, without at the same time thinking of what he is doing, is little better than a hypocrite. We ought also to avoid every kind of exaggeration in our devotions. True piety does not consist in a gloomy, downcast face, a sour kind of behaviour. True piety is cheerful and produces a pleasant impression on others. It is likewise a mistake to load one's self with a great many different kinds of religious practices. We ought to try to be simple in our piety. A short prayer, repeated a hundred times over, is often worth more than a hundred different prayers and devotions, which one performs thoughtlessly and without true devotion of the heart. It would also be a serious mistake to neglect the duties of one's state in life for the sake of prayer. St. Francis de Sales says: "He who performs the duties of his calling with diligent care for the love of God is a truly pious man and is acting after God's own Heart." Let us, therefore, worship God as He desires and as His holy Church prescribes.

LESSON XI.

Superstition.

Catechetical Unit:

Do those who make use of spells and charms, or who believe in dreams, in mediums, spiritists, fortune-tellers and the like, sin against the first Commandment? L. XXX, Q. 319.

Preparation. Dear children, God commands us to honor and adore Him particularly by Faith, Hope and Charity, as we have already learned. Let us first make acts of these three Divine virtues.—How does a person sin against Faith?—Which are the sins against Hope?—How do we sin against the love of God?—All these are sins against religion. But the greatest sin against religion is idolatry. Let us review the lesson on idolatry. *(Question the pupils briefly on the preceding lesson).*—Another sin against true religion is false religion, or superstition. This is also a sin against Faith.

Aim. There is much superstition current among the people. But you must not allow yourselves to be led astray in this matter. Therefore I am now going to explain to you in detail: 1) *What superstition is and* 2) *who are guilty of this sin against the first Commandment of God.*

Presentation. On a certain prayer leaflet there is printed the picture of the Crucified Saviour. To the right and left of the Crucifix are the words: "Jesus, Mary and Joseph!" Under the picture is a prayer to the Holy Cross of Christ. But now just listen to what is printed below that prayer!

"This powerful and salutary prayer to the Holy Cross of Christ was found in the year 1050 on the sepulchre of our Blessed Lord. When the Emperor Francis went to battle, he received it as a gift from the

Pope. Afterwards the Emperor sent it to the city of St. Michel in France, where one can read it even now printed in letters of gold on a shield. Whoever says this prayer daily, or listens to its being read, or carries it with him, or prays each day five Our Fathers and five Hail Marys in honor of the bitter sufferings and death of our Lord Jesus Christ, will not die a sudden death, will not be drowned, will not be burned by fire, will not be killed in battle and will not be harmed by poison. Whoever carries this prayer about with him will not be attacked by any sudden illness. If you happen to see a person fall into a fit upon the street and place this prayer on his right side, he will at once get up and become well again. Whoever carries this prayer from house to house will be blessed by me; but whoever scoffs at it will be cursed by me. The house, in which this prayer is found, will not be harmed by thunder and lightning. Whoever listens to this prayer being recited or prays it himself, will receive a sign from me three days before his death, namely: This is the day of my death!"

Explanation. Really one must laugh at the foolish things on this prayer leaflet, even though the leaflet says: "Whoever laughs or scoffs at this prayer, will be cursed by me!" How is it possible that there are people foolish enough to believe such silly things!—Let us look at this bare-faced superstition a little more closely.

1. In the first place on that little leaflet is a prayer to the Holy Cross. Is that wrong?—No, to honor and reverence the Holy Cross is perfectly right and a good Christian practise. We ought to hold the Cross in high esteem; for it is the death bed of Christ. Jesus Himself has consecrated the Cross by His Sacred Blood. Therefore, we practise a solemn veneration of the Cross in the church every year on Good Friday. The priest unveils the Cross before the eyes of the people and sings: "Behold the wood of the Cross, upon which has hung the Saviour of the world!" And all those

at the altar kneel down and sing: "Come, let us adore it!" This veneration of the Cross is a beautiful custom; for in the Cross we honor Christ Himself.—But it is possible to honor Christ and the Holy Cross in a false manner. Here is a person who really believes: If I recite this prayer in honor of the Cross every day, I shall not die a sudden death and neither can misfortune befall me. How do you know that?—Did God reveal that? No; He never did. Does the Church say so? No; the Church will have nothing to do with such magic prayers. To honor Christ and the Cross in that way is *against the doctrine and the practice of the Church.* That is, therefore, a false Faith or superstition.

Here is another person that prays five Our Fathers and five Hail Marys in honor of Christ's Passion, and believes that thereby he will surely be preserved from every misfortune and harm. What do you say to that? —To honor the sufferings of Christ every day is good and proper; but to honor those sufferings in that way is contrary to the teaching and the practise of the Church.—Here is a third person, that prays each day to the Mother of God and to the Saints, and believes that those Our Fathers and Hail Marys will keep away all sorts of evils. Whence do these prayers get these magic powers? From God? He never said so. From the Church? She will have nothing to do with that kind of thing. To honor God and the Saints in that way is superstition. *We sin by superstition when we honor God or the Saints in a manner contrary to the doctrine or practise of the Church.* Superstition is against the will of God and therefore a sin. But not every one is guilty of sin. Many people do not have any bad intention when they practise such acts, and neither do they realize how foolish such acts are. In regard to such persons we must say: Foolishness is not a sin.

2. But the prayer or rather the paper, the little leaflet itself, is said to be a real miracle worker. For on that leaflet are printed expressly the words: "Who-

ever carries this prayer on his person, will not be attacked by any fit; and if it is placed on the right side of a person suffering from a fit, he will get up at once cured." More than that, this prayer is said to be a real heavenly lightning rod: "A house, in which this prayer is found, will not be harmed by thunder and lightning." Now tell me: Whence is such a wonderful power to come? Did perhaps God confer it upon that prayer leaflet?—In nature there are indeed powers for healing. Sick people make use of them and trust that they will be cured by those means. Is that superstition?—No; for there is really a certain secret power in them. God Himself has placed that healing power in them.—What power has water in the Sacrament of Baptism?—Baptismal water (together with the words of Baptism) purifies the soul from all sin. That is what we believe. Is that superstition?—No; for Christ has given to that water such wonderful heavenly power; He so appointed it when He instituted the Sacrament of Baptism. This wonderful power, therefore, comes from God Himself, by Divine appointment. —We Christians take Holy Water each day. That is a very old, pious Christian custom. We hope thereby to obtain protection in the dangers to body and soul. It that superstition?—Holy Water really has a certain power in itself. But whence has it that power? Not of itself, from Nature, but rather from the prayers of Holy Church. For the Church has received from Christ the power to bless and to consecrate. Therefore that, too, is by Divine appointment. Of course, the chief thing in the use of Holy Water is the firm, pious confidence in God. But whence does a prayer, or even a prayer leaflet, receive such a wonderful and secret power? Neither from God nor by Divine appointment. That is nothing else except foolish superstition. *We sin by superstition, when we attribute to things a certain power, which they cannot have, either by nature, or by the prayers of the Church, or by Divine appointment.*

You know now what is meant by superstition. *(Have the pupils repeat the entire answer above under numbers 1 and 2 together).*

3. Let me show you now a little more in detail *who are guilty of this sin* against the first Commandment.

a) What would you think of a person who really followed the instructions of the prayer leaflet and recited the prayer to the Holy Cross, or five Our Fathers and five Hail Marys, at the same time believing that thereby he would be surely preserved from a sudden death and those other misfortunes mentioned in the leaflet?—Can the mere recitation of these words and sentences produce such wonderful effects?—Words or sentences, which are said to possess such wonderful power of themselves, are called **spells.** That is foolish superstition. Why? Because one thereby attributes to creatures a certain power, which they cannot have, either by nature, or by the prayers of the Church, or by Divine appointment. **They who make use of spells sin against the first Commandment.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

b) Or let us suppose that a person really believed, that by carrying on his person that prayer leaflet, or by putting it on the right side of a person in a fit, or by preserving it in a house, he would surely obtain those wonderful effects promised in that leaflet. What would you think of such a person?—May we believe that by simply doing certain things, or by using certain objects, or by wearing this or that thing, we shall surely obtain the marvelous things promised in that leaflet? —By no means. Such objects, the using or the wearing of such objects, are called charms. **And they who make use of charms sin against the first Commandment.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

c) Some people believe in dreams. And when they awaken they begin to explain or interpret dreams. Do dreams really mean anything?—Dreams are caused by the mind, which is at work, while the body is asleep

or at rest. The mind never sleeps; it is always awake and at work. Thus when we are asleep our imagination, without reason to guide it, mixes a great many things together that we have seen or heard before, and as a result we see strange scenes or pictures in our sleep. Sometimes what we dream seems really to take place; but that is only because we dream of so many things that it would indeed be strange if none of them ever happened. We generally dream about whatever was in our mind shortly before we went to sleep. **They who believe in dreams sin against the first Commandment.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*— Of course, sometimes dreams also come from God. Recall, for instance, the dream of Joseph of Egypt or of Pharao! But that is seldom; and if a dream comes from God, He also will arrange that a man will really understand the dream as God would have him understand it. God now makes His will known to us through His holy Church. (It is true, that sometimes God reveals certain things to His Saints in a dream. As for example, when our Blessed Lord appeared to Saint Margaret Mary and told her that He would like to have the devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus established. But when such holy people tell us that God has spoken to them in a dream we are not obliged to believe them, unless the Church confirms what they say. I say—we are not obliged—that is, we may do so, if we please; but we would not be heretics and commit sin, if we refused to believe that, although it may all be true).

d) The prayer leaflet says at the end: "Whoever listens to this prayer being recited, or recites it himself, will see a sign from God three days before his death, namely: This is the day of my death!" There you see what is meant by **fortune-telling.**—To tell fortunes means to try to make known something secret or hidden or to foretell the future.—You know that the Prophets of the Old Testament were able to foretell the future. We believe that. Is that superstition?— No; these prophesies come from God. When will you

die?—Only God knows that. God could, indeed, reveal that to you. That has really happened, too, at times. We sometimes read of that in the Lives of the Saints. But do you think, that by reason of that prayer to the Holy Cross God will reveal to you the hour of your death?—To believe that would be sinful superstition; for God has never promised that; neither has His Church said so and least of all has that prayer in itself, by its nature, that wonderful power.

Many people claim to be able to discover hidden or future events by means of **cards,** or by **reading the palms** (palmistry) or by **reading cups,** or by means of the **combination of certain numbers,** or by using the **ouija board** (or the planchette), or other foolish practises too numerous to mention. Whence can people know hidden or future events? Of themselves they know nothing; at most they can make a good guess. Neither did God reveal these things to them. What then is left?—Most of it is either fraud or comes from the devil. But whoever has anything to do with the devil is certainly exposed to fraud and to most serious danger. All such superstitious practises are sins against the first Commandment.

e) There is another kind of superstition, which is not mentioned on that prayer leaflet. But you have all doubtless heard of it—**belief in mediums and spirits.** Mediums and spiritists are persons who pretend that they can talk with the dead of the other world, and learn from them where they are and what they are doing in the life beyond the grave. This superstition is called "Spiritism." Spiritists make use of all sorts of deceptions and fraud. If these wonderful things really could take place, or if God wished them to be done, He surely would have given that power to His Church, and not to a few men and women here and there, who generally are far from being holy or trustworthy. After a soul leaves the body its fate is unknown to us, and we can say nothing with absolute certainty of the reward or the punishment of that soul. All that is known about

such matters the Church tells us, and whatever is over and above that is false, or at least doubtful. **They who believe in mediums, spiritists, fortune-tellers and the like, sin against the first Commandment, because they attribute to creatures perfections, which belong to God alone.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

Finally there are other people, who call upon the spirits to produce certain wonderful effects, as for example, to discover hidden treasures, or to harm other people, etc. This kind of superstition is called **magic, or witchcraft, or sorcery.** Such practises arise from an agreement with the devil. But whoever has dealings with the evil spirit, certainly can have no friendship with God. The Lord warned the Israelites against these abominations, saying: "Neither let there be any wizard, nor charmer, nor any one that consulteth pythonic spirits, or fortune-tellers, or that seeketh truth from the dead. For the Lord abhorreth all these things" (Deut. viii, 11s.) Are miracles, too, witchcraft or sorcery?—Miracles come from God, witchcraft comes from the devil and leads to the devil.

Write on the blackboard:

They are guilty of superstition, who believe in

a) spells and charms; b) fortune-telling; c) mediums and spirits, etc.

Synthesis. Let us review what we have learned today. When does a person sin by superstition? Against what Commandment is this sin? What is meant by spells? charms? fortune-telling? mediums and spiritists? witchcraft? Why are these practises superstitious? *(Have the pupils read the answer from the Catechism. Assign the lesson for the next class).*

Application. 1. Now you yourselves tell me some examples of superstition.—The number thirteen, it is said, is a sign of bad luck. "If thirteen people sit at a table, one must surely die." People imagine, therefore, that the number thirteen can kill a person. That is, of course, a very foolish superstition. "Friday is a day of

bad luck." Many people refuse to undertake a journey on a Friday. How can a Friday make a person unhappy or harm one? Superstition! "Children born on a Sunday are children of good fortune." Why? No one knows why. "If a black cat happens to cross the path before one, that is a sign of misfortune." That poor little cat surely will not harm anyone. "If the clock happens to stop, some one will surely die in the relationship." What do you say to that? A person is sick. He prays for fourteen days consecutively, namely on the first day one Our Father, on the second day two Our Fathers, etc., and on the last day he must infallibly be cured. Foolish superstition! To pray for one's health is perfectly proper; but God has not said that we ought to pray in that way neither does the Church want it.

2. (You have, no doubt, heard of slight-of-hand performers or magicians. One must really marvel at the remarkable tricks such people can perform. Once a certain magician was performing before the Sultan. One thing especially surprised all. He took two doves, one black and the other white. He cut off the heads of both birds, and placed the head of the black dove upon the body of the white dove, and the head of the white dove upon the body of the black dove. Then he let them both fly again. The Sultan was thoroughly dumbfounded. He gave the magician two slaves, one black and the other white, and said: "Now repeat that trick again!" However, the magician replied: "I cannot do that at once; I need two weeks for that!" After fourteen days he disappeared.—Was that trick of the magician superstition?—No; the whole performance was a trick, a deception on the part of the spectators. Quickness is not witchcraft or sorcery. Such tricks are, of course, no sin).

Once a farmer's wife came to the priest and begged him for a blessed article. She said: "My cows are all bewildered and do not give any more milk." The priest then wrote a few words upon a piece of paper, sealed it

and gave it to the woman with the order: "Take this piece of paper and walk about the stable at night and investigate every corner carefully!" On the very next night the woman made the rounds as the priest had ordered her to do. Hardly had she entered the barn, when she noticed a man hastily make his exit. From that day forth the cows gave milk just as before. After a few days the woman again paid a visit to the priest and asked him to tell her what was written on the paper. Smiling he opened the paper and read: "Keep awake a little longer—keep your eyes open a little better—then all witchcraft will cease!" There you see, that witchcraft is mostly fraud and deception.

3. Whence comes superstition?—For the most part superstition comes from paganism. The old heathens performed many superstitious practises. For example, the Romans employed certain men, whose special duty it was to examine the entrails (intestines) of the sacrificial victims, in order to discover the will of the gods. Others watched the flight and the cry of birds, in order to be able thereby to foretell the future and to tell fortunes. Yes, they even had sacred chickens. If the chickens would eat greedily, that was a sign of good fortune; if they refused to eat, that was a sign of misfortune. Once a general wanted to engage in a naval battle. But—Oh, bad luck!—the foolish chickens did not want to eat. But the officer was soon finished with these animals. "If they do not want to eat, then they shall drown," he said, and he threw the chicken coop into the sea.

As with the Romans, so superstition was found also among the other pagans. Now when the heathens became Christians many of them did not want to break absolutely with their false gods. Here and there they retained some of their superstitions, and this superstition has continued even to our days. Therefore, superstition is mostly a remnant of idolatry. But idolatry is service of the devil. Do you want to have anything to do with the devil?—At your Baptism you renounced

the wicked enemy and all his works and all his pomps. Consequently do not believe in superstitious practises. A good Christian does not peer curiously into the future but trusts in God and lets Him rule according to His own good pleasure. He prays: "Thy will be done on earth as it is in Heaven!"

LESSON XII.

Veneration of the Saints.

Catechetical Unit:

1) Does the first Commandment forbid the honoring of the Saints? L. XXXI, Q. 331.

2) Does the first Commandment forbid us to pray to the Saints? L. XXXI, Q. 332.

3) What do you mean by praying to the Saints? L. XXXI, Q. 333.

4) How do we know that the Saints hear us? L. XXXI, Q. 334.

5) Why do we believe that the Saints will help us? L. XXXI, Q. 335.

6) How are the Saints and we members of the same Church? L. XXXI, Q. 336.

(N. B. The remaining questions and answers on the Communion of Saints are explained in the volume "*The Creed Explained*," Lesson XLVII, pp. 409, Third Edition).

Preparation. Dear children, the great St. Bernard in his youth was at one time afflicted with a violent headache, which deprived him of all rest and which all the remedies that were prescribed were unable to relieve. Thereupon some of the attendants bethought themselves of a woman, who was reported to have the power of healing diseases by means of certain charms applied to the sick person. They accordingly introduced her into the chamber, but no sooner had the holy youth perceived her intention, than he leaped from his

bed and drove her from the room. Having done so, he lay down again, and fell into a refreshing slumber, on awakening from which he found himself entirely cured. He did not believe in superstitious practises. Let us first review the lesson on superstition. *(Question the pupils briefly on the foregoing lesson).*—In the Apostles' Creed we pray: "I believe in the Communion of Saints." Who belongs to the great family of the Saints?—This family embraces Heaven and earth and Purgatory. Why are the members of this family called "Saints?"—Who is excluded from this threefold union?—How do the Saints in Heaven help us?—Of what Saints have we already spoken in the Christian Doctrine class?—You know St. Boniface (St. Patrick) from your Church History. What other saints do you know?—Your Patron Saint, the Patron of your parish church, the Patron Saint of the United States of America.—Not all the Saints enjoy the same honor in the Church. Some are honored in the whole Catholic Church; these are called *"Saints."* Others are honored only in a part of the Church; they are called *"Blessed."* First a person is declared by the Church to be *"Blessed"* and only after that is he called *"Saint."*

Aim. Did you perhaps ever hear of Blessed Crescentia of Kaufbeuren?—I am now going to tell you something about this holy person. From her life's story we shall see: *How we Catholics honor the Saints and why we honor them.*

Presentation. Crescentia lived over two hundred years ago. Her parents were poor weavers. Already at the age of seven years this pious little girl was permitted to receive her First Holy Communion. Even at that time one could see plainly that she was a special child of God and of grace. In school she was an example and a model for all the other children. Her teacher in religion once said to her: "My child, you must have a higher teacher." And then her teacher explained, saying: "I never saw such a child; she must be instructed by Heaven itself." After Crescentia had

grown up, she entered the convent. From now on she had to suffer a great deal. It seemed as though Jesus wanted to place His own crown of thorns upon her head. But never did one hear a word of complaint from her.

I will describe for you how she died. During her final illness Crescentia had to endure frightful pains. But she bore all with heavenly patience. When she was at the point of death, the Archangel Raphael appeared to her and led her home into Heaven. Scarcely had she died, when her face became wonderfully beautiful like a blushing rose; all the members of her body became as soft and flexible as wax. A heavenly odor of sweetness filled the whole convent. Great throngs of people gathered together, in order to look once more upon this venerable religious; for everybody believed that a Saint had died.

Immediately some miracles took place. A father brought his sick child to the convent. The little fellow was suffering terrible pain. No doctor was able to help him; the little boy cried night and day. The father knelt beside the coffin of Crescentia and prayed. Suddenly the child grew quiet and became well. Later on that boy became parish priest of Kaufbeuren.—A young woman also came to the corpse. She was so crippled, that she could hardly stand. They led her to the coffin. She knelt down, prayed and was cured. All the people saw the miracle; for she was able to walk perfectly and without help to her own home.

The corpse of the Saint was buried in the church. At the grave, too, many miracles took place. Our Holy Father, the Pope, ordered that these miracles and the life of the Saint be carefully investigated. The examination (the process) showed: that the miracles really had taken place, and that her life was indeed a holy life. Therefore Crescentia was declared to be "Blessed" in Rome on the seventh of October, 1900. Forty thousand persons from all countries of the world had

come together in St. Peter's church. The interior of the church was resplendent in holiday attire indeed it was so beautiful there, that all felt as if they were really in Heaven. The procession of the Cardinals, Bishops and Priests entered the church. The services began. A Cardinal announced solemnly in the name of the Pope: "Crescentia belongs to the number of the Blessed of Heaven and may be honored and prayed to by the faithful." At that moment the picture of that blessed nun was unveiled. The people saw Crescentia in the midst of the glories of Heaven, surrounded by a starry crown of light. Filled with wonder and holy awe the thousands present looked at this marvelous scene and joined with all their might in the hymn of praise: "Holy God, we praise Thy name!" And all the bells of the Eternal City joined their voices with the hymn of the faithful and sent forth the message into the Catholic world: "Crescentia has been declared blessed!" And for the first time the prayer ascended to Heaven: "Pray for us, O Blessed Crescentia!"

It was noon. Amidst the jubilations of sixty thousand persons the Holy Father entered St. Peter's, in order to honor this simple nun. And when evening came, the gigantic church was all ablaze in a sea of light. Each little flame seemed to call out to Heaven: "Pray for us, O Blessed Crescentia!"

That was the beatification of Crescentia in Rome. The next year (1901) occurred the solemn celebration in honor of Crescentia in Kaufbeuren. The feast lasted for a whole week. Eight Bishops took part in the celebration and hundreds of priests and thousands of the Christian people. Twice each day a sermon was preached, in order to proclaim the praises of this blessed nun, and each day a Solemn Pontifical Mass was celebrated to thank God. The sacred body was preserved in the choir of the splendidly decorated parish church. It rested in a casket of glass, clothed with costly garments of gold embroidery. From early morning to late night the pious faithful passed the coffin in

turn, in order to view the blessed religious and to show her honor. Finally the sacred remains were solemnly interred in the convent chapel at the foot of the altar. The procession to the chapel took over an hour, so immense was the throng of pious Christian people.

(N. B. This same Presentation might be used for the next lesson on the Veneration to be paid to Sacred Images and Relics).

Explanation. 1. a) Truly no king was ever honored as was this poor nun! Thus does the Church honor her Saints. But is it right and proper to show honor to the Saints in that way?—Yes, indeed; for that is what holy Church teaches in God's name. Therefore our Catechism says: **The first Commandment does not forbid the honoring of the Saints, but rather approves it.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard; see the diagram below just above the synthesis).*

Do you know *why?*—Let me show you a little more in detail why it is right and proper to honor the Saints.

The early Christians showed honor to the holy Martyrs in a special manner. How does the world honor its great men?—It erects statues to its great men; names streets, public parks, cities after its great men; it praises their deeds in speeches and songs. And rightly so! And why then ought not the Church likewise to honor her great Saints? Honor to whom honor is due! Crescentia had led a life of heroic virtue. Her heart glowed like a flame of love for God, and this love for God was sorely tried in the fire of suffering. God Himself honored her and glorified her by miracles. What God does, we, too, may do. Yes, it is right and proper to show honor to the Saints.

Moreover, the celebration in honor of Crescentia was truly a glorious spectacle. Thousands of people were touched by it. Surely many a poor sinner must have said of himself on that occasion: Oh! how I must feel ashamed, when I think of this holy life and of my own

sinful life. I must become a different man! Many a pious Christian must have begun to feel uneasy as did St. Francis of Sales. Do you know the story?—He was permitted to be present, when St. Francis Xavier was pronounced Blessed. He was all wrought up over it. Deeply impressed with the glory and splendor of it all he cried out: "That is the second Francis on our altars, and I will be the third!" And he actually became the third St. Francis. Thus many a Christian must have resolved: I, too, must become holy! Crescentia has succeeded, why should not I also be able to do the same thing? I am determined to imitate this blessed religious and to practise her virtues most zealously. Yes, that is the best honor we can pay to the Saints. We ought to be especially solicitous to become like to them by imitating their virtues. You see, then, that it is right and proper to show honor to the Saints.

b) Of course, many Protestants are scandalized over the fact that we Catholics honor the Saints. They say that veneration of the Saints is idolatry. Is that true?—If we really did honor the Saints as we honor God Himself, we should, of course, be guilty of the detestable sin of idolatry. But there is all the difference in the world between the honor we show to the Saints and the honor we pay to God. We honor and adore God alone as our Supreme Lord and Master; we honor Him for His own sake, or on account of the infinite perfections which He has of Himself. But we honor the Saints only as God's most faithful servants and friends, and because of the gifts and advantages which they have received from God. We honor God, because He is God; we honor Blessed Crescentia because on earth she was a faithful servant of God, and now she is a friend of God in Heaven. Thereby we show honor to God Himself. The first Commandment does not forbid the honoring of the Saints, but rather approves it; because **by honoring the Saints, who are the chosen friends of God, we honor God Himself.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard)*—Who helped Crescentia

to become Blessed Crescentia?—God gave to her even as a child such rich graces; and with these talents of grace she co-operated faithfully, otherwise she would never have become a Saint in Heaven.

2. The story of Blessed Crescentia teaches us not only that the Church honors this chosen friend of God, but also that the Church prays to her. But is it right and proper to pray to the Saints?—Yes, indeed; for the Church has expressly and solemnly defined: "It is good and useful to invoke the Saints" (Council of Trent, Session XXV). The Church is the mouthpiece of God Almighty, and it is her right and duty to tell us the meaning of the Commandments of God. Therefore our Catechism says: **The first Commandment does not forbid us to pray to the Saints.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

3. But what does that mean "to pray to the Saints?" —Pious people have often said to me: "Please include me in your prayers." That is right. St. Paul also recommended himself to the prayers of the faithful. Thus Crescentia, too, was solemnly invoked for the first time on the occasion of her beatification. Yes, even our Holy Father, the Pope, prayed: "Pray for us, O Blessed Crescentia!" Since then many people are praying like that every day. That is right. We ought all to pray for one another, begging God to help us and our friends and our neighbors. St. James says: "Brethren, pray for one another, that you may be saved. For the continual prayer of a just man availeth much" (V, 16). There you see what we mean by praying to the Saints. **By praying to the Saints we mean the asking of their help and prayers.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

4. Many foolish people imagine that by beatification our Holy Father, the Pope, lets a Christian into Heaven. These ignorant people show that they do not understand anything at all about the veneration of the Saints. The Pope cannot let any one into Heaven: only

God can do that. Our Holy Father only declares, that a certain pious Christian is already in Heaven. First God Himself must pronounce a Christian Blessed. Only then can the Church declare such a person Blessed. But how does God tell us that?—God speaks through miracles. See, already at the casket of Crescentia two wonderful miracles took place; later on other miracles were added. Thus God spoke very plainly: She is already a Saint in Heaven. For surely God does not work miracles for sinners.—But miracles alone are not enough. A person must also have been a hero by a virtuous life. Such was the case with Crescentia. As surely as there are stars in the heavens, so surely is Crescentia a Saint in Heaven. That is the reason, why Crescentia hears our prayers and can help us: she hears them from God Himself. **We know that the Saints hear us, because they are with God, who makes our prayers known to them.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

5. The Saints are the chosen friends of God in Heaven. But they are also our friends, yes, our brothers, who together with us are all members of the same great Christian family. Therefore they love us and are anxious to help us. We see that from the story of Crescentia. Scarcely had the poor father prayed for the cure of his sick child at the coffin of Crescentia, when suddenly the sick child was cured. How many people have already been changed from sinners into pious Christians through the prayers they have offered to the Saints of God, God alone knows. We shall not know that until the day of judgment. If the Saints pray to God for us, He will surely hear their prayers. **We believe that the Saints will help us, because both they and we are members of the same Church, and they love us as their brethren.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

6. What joy there must have been in Heaven, when Crescentia entered the company of the Saints! What joy there was upon earth, when our Holy Father proclaimed Crescentia Blessed! Heaven and earth go to

make up the Church of Jesus Christ. And Purgatory, too, is part of this same Church, as we learned before. The Saints in Heaven, the souls in Purgatory, and the faithful on earth, are brothers and sisters of the great family of Christ, the Church. No wonder then, that there was great rejoicing among the Saints in Heaven, on earth and in Purgatory over the honors conferred upon Blessed Crescentia. **The Saints and we are members of the same Church, because the Church in Heaven and the Church on earth are one and the same Church, and all its members are in communion with one another.** (*Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

Write on the blackboard:

1. The first Commandment does not forbid, but approves:
   a) honoring the Saints—God's chosen friends;
   b) praying to the Saints (2).

3. Praying to the Saints—asking their help.

4. Saints are with God—hence they hear us through Him.

5. Saints and we are members of the same Church —they love us.

6. Church in Heaven and on earth—the one, same Church.

Synthesis. Honoring the Saints is honoring God, devotion to the Saints is devotion to God. We have seen that today. Let us always bear this well in mind; for a good Christian ought to speak for his Faith, when others ridicule it. What does the Catholic Church teach in regard to the veneration of the Saints? May we pray to them? What does it mean to pray to the Saints? How do we know that the Saints hear our prayers? Why will the Saints help us? How are the Saints and we members of the same Church? What do we call this union? *(Have the pupils read the answers*

from the Catechism. Assign the lesson for the next class).

Application. 1. Now I am going to see who can think. A Protestant makes this objection to you: "Why have you so many feasts in honor of the Saints? With you Catholics there is no worship of God but all devotion to the Saints." How do you answer that? —Honoring the Saints is honoring God. The difference is only this: On feasts of our Blessed Lord we honor God *through ourselves alone,* on feasts of the Saints we honor God *through the Saints;* but it is always honoring God. Moreover, when the Church prays to God, she says: "Have mercy on us!" When she prays to the Saints, she says: "Pray for us!" How did the faithful call upon Crescentia? "Pray for us, O Blessed Crescentia, that we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ!" Therefore reverence for the Saints is not idolatry, but on the contrary genuine worship of God Himself.

Another person makes this objection: "By venerating the Saints you take away from God the honor that is His due." What do you answer to that?—By honoring the Saints we take nothing away from God. Or does the sun fall short of honor, when we say: The moon is beautiful? No, for the moon has its light from the sun. In much the same manner Mary and the Saints have their holiness from God. Neither is the sun injured in any way, because its light is reflected in thousands of little dewdrops in the meadow. In the same way neither is God injured at all, if His grace is reflected in the Saints, just as the sun is reflected in the dewdrops and makes them beautiful. Always and at all times: "God is wonderful in His Saints."

2. God bestowed great honors upon Blessed Crescentia. But He heaped still greater honors upon Mary. What titles of honor do we bestow upon her?—We call her "Mother of God," "Most Blessed Virgin." In the Litany we invoke her as the "Refuge of Sinners," the

"Help of Christians," the "Queen of Angels and of Saints." What honors did God Himself confer upon Mary?—He raised her to the highest dignity—to be the Mother of His own dear Son. He sent an angel to say to her: "Hail, Mary, full of grace!" When Jesus was dying on the Cross, He gave His Mother to be our Mother: "Behold thy Son!" He took Mary into Heaven and crowned her Queen of Heaven. How does the Church honor Mary?—"Hail, Mary, full of grace!" that is what we add to every Our Father. In Mary's honor we recite the Rosary; we have the beautiful devotions during the month of May; we make pilgrimages to her shrines. There are countless churches, altars, statues, hymns, children, dedicated to Mary. But I wonder is that right?—A Protestant makes this objection: "You Catholics worship Mary." That is not true. Of course, Mary is raised high above the Angels and the Saints, for she is the Queen of Heaven. But she is far from being God. God is always God; but Mary is always a creature of God. Nevertheless Mary is nearest and dearest to God; for she is God's own Mother.

3. Some Saints we invoke in special petitions.—We ask St. Joseph for a happy death; St. Florian we call upon in danger of fire; St. Blase we call upon in throat troubles; St. Ottilia in eye troubles; St. Aloysius in dangers against holy purity. But what is ever the chief thing in the veneration of the Saints?—Every Christian ought to honor his patron or name's sake. Do you know the story of your Patron Saint? Have you a copy of the Lives of the Saints at home? In many Christian homes of an evening the life of the particular Saint of the day is read aloud in the presence of the whole family. That is a good and beautiful custom.

4. But we ought especially to be faithful children to Mary. For Mary is our Mother. St. Charles Borromeo had the statue of Mary placed over the portals of all the churches. Thereby he meant to teach: Just as we

enter into the church through the portals, so we enter into Heaven through Mary. Therefore we also pray: "Gate of Heaven, pray for us!" St. Bernard even calls Mary: "Interceding Omnipotence." He means by that, that Mary can do all things by her prayers in the sight of God. That is indeed a beautiful and true saying. From St. Bernard, too, comes that splendid prayer: "Remember, O most gracious Advocate," etc. Pray that often! Let us say it now all together.

LESSON XIII.

Veneration of Images and Relics.

Catechetical Unit:

1) Is it right to show respect to the pictures and images of Christ and His Saints? L. XXI, Q. 342.

2) Does the first Commandment forbid the making of images? L. XXXI, Q. 341.

3) Is it allowed to pray to the crucifix or to the images and relics of the Saints? L. XXXI, Q. 343.

4) Why do we pray before the crucifix and the images and relics of the Saints? L. XXXI, Q. 344.

5) Does the first Commandment forbid us to honor relics? L. XXXI, Q. 340.

Preparation. Dear children, today is the feast of N. N. We Catholics honor the Saints. The veneration paid to the Saints is a part of the worship of God. We saw that in the last class. *(Question the pupils briefly on the foregoing lesson).*—If a dear friend parts from us, we like to have a memento of him, a photograph or something that belonged to him. That little memento is then dear to us and precious in our eyes; for it reminds us again and again of our good friend. The Saints are our dear friends in Heaven. We love them and like to think of them. Therefore we make pic-

tures of the Saints; we hold their belongings, too, in honor, for example, their clothing, books, rosaries, but especially their bodies and their bones. All of those things are for us dear and precious mementos; they are called relics.

Aim. *The Veneration of Images and Relics is a beautiful and pious Christian custom.* That is what I am going to show you today. But first I shall relate to you the story of a certain Saint.

Presentation. One of the largest and most beautiful churches is the Cathedral of Milan. This glorious temple of God hides a precious treasure, the body of St. Charles Borromeo. This great and holy Bishop is dead more than three hundred years; but he will never be forgotten by his own people. Neither am I surprised at that; for he was really a good shepherd to his sheep and his lambs.

Charles came from a noble family. But in his heart there was no spark of pride. No one was too poor in his sight, no beggar too dirty; to all he spoke kindly and lovingly as a friend to a friend. He was rich in money and possessions; but he became poor for the sake of the poor. That was evident particularly, when a terrible pestilence raged in Milan and thousands died of famine and misery. Then the Bishop sold all that he possessed; even his bed did he give away. Yes, he himself carried the sick upon his shoulders to the hospital and cared for them tenderly as a mother cares for her sick child.

Charles was a real father to the poor and the sick. Therefore, his people loved and honored him as their father. And even to this very day his people cling to this great Bishop with child-like love and veneration. One can say in all truth, that one meets with St. Charles Borromeo everywhere in Milan. There is no church in that city, yes, scarcely a house, where one does not find a picture or an image of this Saint. The people decorate his picture or statue, particularly on

his feast-day (Nov. 4), and light candles before his image. And oftentimes one can see people kneeling before his image, invoking their protector and intercessor with childlike confidence. Why he is "our Saint," they say.

This great and holy Bishop had, of course, to die like all other men. His love for his flock used up his life's energy before his natural span of years. His body was not interred in the cemetery, but in the splendid cathedral of Milan. Under the High Altar there is a little chapel. In it there is a beautiful altar richly decorated wth gold. On the altar rests a priceless coffin of precious rock cut from the mountain side. Enclosed in this coffin there is a second casket, entirely of silver and richly decorated with jewels. In it rests the body of the Saint. He is vested in his episcopal garments, which sparkle with gold and precious stones. This sepulchre is worth hundreds of thousands of dollars. This is indeed a great sum of money; but, after all, it is not too much for a man who has done such great things and given away all that he possessed for the benefit of the poor and the needy. Thus does a grateful people honor so great and holy a Bishop; and truly he is deserving of such honor and love.

But much more than the people did God Himself honor His faithful servant. At the grave of the Saint many miracles have already taken place. Sick persons, whom no doctor could help any more, have found miraculous help there. Just one example! A certain father had a very sick daughter, named Dominica. This girl, so deserving of pity, was a cripple and blind for at least fifteen years. She looked more like a skeleton of skin and bones than a living being. They carried her twice to the sepulchre of the Saint. Suddenly she was cured; she stood up and walked home without the help of any one. Even to this day many such people, suffering from various maladies, like to come to the grave of this saintly Bishop. For they know, that even though the Saint is no longer on earth, nevertheless, in Heaven

he still has a kind heart and will gladly pray for his own dear ones. *(Show a picture of the Cathedral of Milan).*

Explanation. 1. When St. Charles died, he was only forty-six years of age. He became a victim of love for his little sheep. Then there was great mourning and weeping among the people. All said: "Our good father is dead; a Saint has died!" However, even though the great Bishop did die, he still lives in the hearts of his people. How do we know that?—All the people honor and venerate the picture or image of the Saint. But is that right and proper in God's eyes?—Has any one of you lost your father by death? Surely you have a picture of your father at home. Is not that picture dear and precious in your eyes? You often look at that picture of your father, and think of all the good things he has done for you, do you not? Quite right; the grateful love of a child demands that. Would a child go so far as to soil or destroy the picture of its father? If it did, what would you think of such conduct?—Have you no love at all for your dear father? Is that all that your father means to you?—Now see, St. Charles was the very best of spiritual fathers to his children. How much good did he not do to his children, particularly to the poor! Yes, like a good shepherd he laid down his life for his flock. Therefore I am so glad to see that the image of this great Saint is found everywhere in Milan. I rejoice, too, that the people decorate his picture with flowers and wreaths and burn lights before it. That shows us the grateful love of the people. And do you think that the good God will be against such a practise? No, of this I am certain, that our Heavenly Father is pleased with that and looks down with pleasure upon these good people—Therefore **it is right to show respect to the pictures and images of Christ and His Saints, because they are representations and memorials of them.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard; see the diagram below just above the synthesis.).*

2. But is not that idolatry?—If we made images of Christ and the Saints and adored these images of canvas or wood or stone or marble, we should, of course, be guilty of the sin of idolatry. That would be a sin against the first Commandment of God, for we would be acting like the heathens of old. But do we do that? No; we do not venerate the picture, or the image, but rather the Saint whom the picture or image represents and of whom the image reminds us. You see, then, that veneration of images is veneration of the Saints; and veneration of the Saints is veneration of God. Therefore our Catechism says: **The first Commandment does forbid the making of images, if they are made to be adored as gods; but it does not forbid the making of them to put us in mind of Jesus Christ, His Blessed Mother and the Saints.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

3. We do not merely venerate the images of Jesus Christ and of the Saints; we do much more than that. The pious people of Milan often knelt down before the image of St. Charles. Is that allowed?—Is that right?—Many Protestants have indeed taken offense at that practise and said: "Just look at those superstitious Catholics! They even commit idolatry and adore and pray to images. Why did not God Himself say expressly: "Thou shalt not make to thyself any graven thing to adore it!" Who can give me the right answer to this objection?—Surely, we Catholics are not so foolish and ignorant as to imagine that a lifeless image can hear us or help us. How can Protestants make such a ridiculous accusation! Every Catholic believes, that **it is not allowed to pray to the crucifix or images and relics of the Saints, for they have no life, nor power to help us, nor even to hear us.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

4. Why then do we pray before images? When the good people of Milan knelt in prayer before St. Charles' image, they thought of this great Bishop and of all the good things he had done. Then their hearts

were set aglow with devotion, and they resolved to imitate his virtues. Is not that a very praiseworthy thing? —So too, when you and I kneel before an image of Jesus Christ, or of His Blessed Mother, or of the Saints, and pray, we think of Christ, of Mary and of the Saints, whose pictures we see before our eyes. Then we pray to Christ, to Mary and the Saints, not to their images. And these images remind us of Jesus, of Mary and the Saints, and our hearts are moved with desire to imitate their holy lives. Is that superstition? No; that is pious Christian faith. **We pray before the crucifix and the images and relics of the Saints, because they enliven our devotion by exciting pious affections and desires, and by reminding us of Christ, and of the Saints, that we may imitate their virtues.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

5. a.) When a Bishop dies, his body is buried in his church. That is a beautiful custom. But even greater honor was bestowed upon St. Charles; a special subterranean chapel was built beneath the glorious cathedral. There his body rests now in a precious silver coffin, which is richly bedecked with precious jewels. The coffin rests upon the altar, where holy Mass is offered. Is not that too much honor for the body of a man?—It is true that Protestants do not want to hear anything of such practises and ridicule the veneration we pay to the relics of the Saints. But already the first Christians built their altars over the tombs of the holy martyrs. They certainly must have known from the Apostles what was right and truly Christian. You see, therefore, that **the first Commandment does not forbid us to honor relics.** *(Repeat together; use the blackbooad).*

b) But why may we honor the relics of the Saints? —The cathedral of Milan is a venerable temple of God. But the body of St. Charles is even more venerable and far more sacred. And why?—That body was once *the living temple of the Holy Ghost.* And how often has it not been consecrated again and again in Holy Com-

munion! Must we not honor such a sanctuary?—This body was also at one time *the instrument in the hands of the Holy Ghost.* O! how much good did not those hands perform! How many words of comfort did not that mouth speak! How tirelessly did not those feet hasten after the sinner! How harshly did not the great Bishop of Milan treat his body by fastings and mortification! Do you think that all that was in vain? His soul has long ago received its reward. The body, too, will not be left empty or go unrewarded. Now it rests as yet in the grave, it is true; but at some future time the glorified soul will re-enter into that body. Then the body will also be taken up into Heaven, where it will be permitted to shine like the sun before the throne of God for all eternity.—There are many reasons, therefore, why we Catholics honor the relics of the Saints. We honor the relics of the Saints **because relics are the bodies of the Saints or objects directly connected with them or with our Lord.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

Moreover, the body of St. Charles is still pretty well preserved; one can still discern quite clearly the features of this holy Bishop. Now surely God must have done that. That is how He pays honor to His faithful servants. Then you remember the miracles performed at the grave of St. Charles. God worked these wonders. Therefore the Lord Almighty Himself has bestowed the greatest honors upon this Saint! Do you know why Protestants ridicule the veneration of relics? Because they themselves have no Saints.

Write on the blackboard:

The Veneration of images:

1. right—sacred images represent and remind us of Christ and the Saints.

2. not forbidden by first Commandment.

3. Prayer to images—forbidden.

4. Prayer before images—right—sacred images remind us of Christ and Saints—excite us to imitate their virtues.

5. Veneration of relics not forbidden by first Commandment. Relics are sacred.

Synthesis. We have already heard that the veneration of the Saints is genuine worship of God Himself. Today we have learned that the veneration of images and of relics is also real worship of God Himself. What does the Church teach about the veneration of images? Is that forbidden by the first Commandment? May we also pray to images? May we pray before images? Why do we pray before sacred images? Is not that idolatry? Why not? What do you mean by sacred relics? May we honor sacred relics? Why? Is not that a superstitious practise? Why not? *(Have the pupils read the answers from the Catechism. Assign the lesson for the next class).*

Application. 1. A pious Christian thinks a great deal of sacred images. What images of Saints are there in our church? Have you in your room at home a picture of Christ? an image of Mary? Who of you has a crucifix to hold in your hands when on your death bed? You ought to kiss that crucifix each night before going to sleep, that Jesus may bless you. If you happen to see an image of Christ, no matter where it be, salute it reverently and pray: "We adore Thee, Lord Jesus, and we praise Thee; for by Thy Holy Cross Thou hast redeemed the world!" You ought to love to look at images of the Saints. A beautiful picture is like a little story of the Saints, as it were, and admonishes us: "You, too, ought to become a little Saint!" Make the Stations of the Cross from time to time. They are for us a loud and living sermon: "See, what Jesus has done for you, how He loved you even unto death. Love Him, too, and remain faithful to Him unto death!" When you pray, look at the sacred images reverently and devoutly; then you will not be so easily distracted.

2. Certain pictures are called "miraculous." Do you know of any such pictures?—The picture of Our Lady of Perpetual Help. O, never desecrate a sacred picture! That would be blasphemous; for such a desecration would be aimed at God Himself. God oftentimes punishes such conduct most severely. (Once a certain student maliciously cut the throat of an image of the Blessed Virgin. No one knew what he had done. But soon it became known. For the wicked desecrator felt a severe pain round about his throat. A red stripe formed about his throat, which pained him more and more. He was taken to a hospital; but all the art and science of the doctors were in vain. They were powerless to assist this poor unfortunate man. They said: "We have never seen anything like that before." Finally the wicked student acknowledged his sin, for he was troubled in conscience and at the point of death. —A Stolz).

3. Sacred relics, too, are to the pious Christian dear and loving remembrances or mementos. The Church herself honors sacred relics. In every altar there are relics of the Saints. That dates from the earliest Christian times. The priest often during Holy Mass kisses the altar. That is veneration of relics.—(Many sacred relics are a continual miracle. The body of St. Francis Xavier is even now entirely preserved. The tongue of St. John Nepomucene is still whole and entire; the same is true of St. Anthony. The blood of the Martyr, St. Januarius, liquifies from time to time. The body of St. Theresa emits a delightful odor. From the bones of St. Walburga there issues a miraculous oil.—The most precious of all relics are those of Jesus Christ, particularly the instruments of the Passion. The Holy Cross is honored most highly. A large piece of this precious relic is kept in the Basilica of Santa Gerusalemme in Rome; another particle is preserved in the Cathedral of Notre Dame in Paris; a minute particle is found in many churches of the world. Christ's Crown of Thorns is kept in the sacred chapel at Paris.

One of the Sacred Nails is in the crown of the king at Monza, a second Nail is in Paris, and a third in Madrid. The napkin with the impression of the Sacred Face of Christ is kept in St. Peter's Church at Rome).

4. When you venerate the relics of the Saints, do not forget that your bodies, too, are the temples of the Most High God. When were these temples consecrated?—The body of St. Charles Borromeo will at some time make a glorious ascent into Heaven. Do you also want to be with that Saint? Then never desecrate your bodies. St. Paul says: "Know you not that you are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?—The temple of God is holy; which you are" (I Cor. iii, 16s). Let us now sing (or recite) the beautiful hymn in honor of the Holy Cross.

LESSON XIV.

Reverence for God's Holy Name.

Catechetical Unit:

1) What is the second Commandment? L. XXXII, Q. 345.

2) What are we commanded by the second Commandment? L. XXXII, Q. 346 (first part).

Preparation. Dear children, the first Commandment of God commands us all to adore the Lord God and to give Him due honor. We fulfil this precept by practising our holy religion, that is, by interior and exterior worship. This same Commandment also commands us to show respect and honor to God's chosen friends, the Saints. Finally, we must venerate sacred images and relics. Let us first review the teaching on the veneration of images and relics. *(Question the pupils briefly on the preceding lesson).*—Today we shall study the second of God's holy Commandments, which treats of the sacred name of the Almighty. Let us say this Commandment together. **The second Commandment is:**

Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain. *(Use the blackboard; see the diagram below just above the synthesis).*—When God gave this Commandment to Moses on Mount Sinai, He added these very significant words: "The Lord will not hold him guiltless, that shall take the name of the Lord his God in vain" (Exodus xx, 7). These words teach us, that God is most jealous of His honor, and that He strictly requires of us deep respect and reverence for His sacred name. Therefore, never, on any account, may we profane this all-holy name, or use it in a careless manner, that is, in vain.

God's chosen people, the Jews, held that terrible name in holy awe and veneration. For they never forgot that solemn scene in the desert, when Moses lay upon his face before the burning bush, and the Lord spoke His name, saying: "I am who am" (Exodus iii, 14). Yes, that is God's proper Name: "I am the Eternal One—Yahweh (Jehovah)." Neither did the Jews ever forget that other scene in the desert at the foot of Mount Sinai, when the Lord God, amidst lightning and thunder, spoke the second Commandment: "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain!" Therefore they held this all-holy name in the highest honor and veneration. God's name appears very frequently in the pages of the Old Testament; but only the High Priest was permitted to pronounce that sacred word, and that but once a year, on the solemn feast of the Atonement. When the Jews met with the sacred name in the Bible, they would not pronounce it. They substituted another word for it, namely, the word Lord (Adonai). The High Priest bore the sacred name, Jahweh, engraved on a plate of the purest gold, that was fastened to his mitre (hat) and hung down over his forehead, so that all the people looking at this sight, might be reminded of the important duty of always observing the second Commandment. But not only the Jews reverenced the Lord's name; the pagans, too, held that blessed name in the highest reverence.

Aim. Today I am going to tell you a story of how a great pagan king, Alexander of Macedonia, honored God's name, and thus left us a most beautiful example of *how we, too, ought to reverence the Lord's name.*

Presentation. Alexander the Great conquered one city after another, one country after the other. He determined to march against the Holy City of God's chosen people, Jerusalem. The High Priest, Jaddua, was in great anguish of heart, when he heard of this plan of the pagan king. With all the people Jaddua turned to God in fervent prayer and sacrifice, invoking the all-holy name, Jahweh. Then God revealed to Jaddua in his sleep to be of good courage. He ordered him to put on his high priestly garments, and to go forth, at the head of the priests and the people, to meet this angry heathen conqueror. In obedience to this revelation the High Priest went forth from the Holy City to the heights of Sapha to meet King Alexander. From that place it was possible to see the city and the temple. Chaldeans and Phoenicians, who were in the army of the king, expected that surely he would destroy Jerusalem and maltreat the High Priest of the Jews. But much to their surprise, as soon as Alexander saw the High Priest vested in his glorious garments and noticed the awful name of God engraved on the golden plate on the mitre, he came forward alone to meet the solemn procession. Bowing down deeply before the awful name of God, Alexander saluted the High Priest reverently. The followers of this pagan king were astounded; they could not understand it at all. Only Parmenion, the chief general of Alexander's army, dared to ask the question: "Why, O King! have you, whom all others worship on bended knee, bowed down before this High Priest?" Alexander answered: "Not to him have I bowed my knee, but to the Lord God, whose Priest he is!" Then the king related how in a dream, while he was still in Macedonia, he had seen this High Priest clothed in these very vestments, encouraging him to go to battle and promising him

that God would go before him and give into his hands the kingdom of the Persians.

Then the High Priest led Alexander into the temple, where this hero offered sacrifice, and Jaddua opened for him the sacred book of Daniel, the Prophet, where it was foretold that this king would overcome the Persian kingdom and establish another kingdom in its stead. (Count Stolberg's *History of the Religion of Jesus Christ).*

Explanation. 1. a.) Dear children, as the solemn procession wended its way slowly from the Holy City to meet this tyrant, surely the hearts of these pious Jews must have quailed with fear at the thought of the cruelty and wickedness of this pagan king! Already the soldiers of Alexander's army were rejoicing over the chance of putting the torch to the capital city of the Jews and of carrying away the rich treasures of the temple. Yes, soon the Jews would be made slaves of the heathens. But what must not have been the astonishment of all, when they saw this mighty prince come forward alone, not indeed with proud and defiant countenance, but with bowed head and reverential attitude! What was it, that caused this wonderful change?—Surely it was not the fear that the High Priest and the Jews would be able to overcome him. No, indeed; it must have been something entirely different. It was the name of God, Jahweh, that guided the heart of this pagan king; it was the Lord's name, that softened his heart towards the Jews. The great King fell down upon his knees at the sight of the High Priest, in order to adore Jahweh's name, which he saw on the golden plate attached to the precious mitre of Jaddua. You see, therefore, that Alexander the Great had extraordinary reverence for God's holy name. If that is true of a pagan, what must be the reverence of a Christian! How devoutly ought we not to speak that all-holy name! We are command-

ed by the second Commandment to speak with reverence of God. *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

If I call out: "Charles!" whom do I mean? I mean him, who bears that name; I mean the *person,* who is called by that name. Or if your mother calls out: "Mary, come here!" whom does she mean? She means, of course, her, that person, who is called by the name of Mary. You see, therefore, a name stands for the person. The name and the person belong together. Consequently if we honor the name, we honor the person likewise, who bears that name; and if we dishonor the name, we show dishonor also to the person, who is called by that name. Remember, then, dear children, that by the name of God, we do not mean the mere word, but the *person of God,* His infinite Majesty and Perfections. Just think for a moment of the Majesty and the Perfections of God Almighty! There are upon the earth some fifteen hundred millions of human beings; each one of these God knows, preserves, guides. He hears their prayers; He helps them in their needs; He rewards or punishes them for the most part here below. How immense is not the knowledge of this Supreme Being! Millions of little worlds revolve in space; God has created them all; He maintains them all; He gives them all motion. How boundless is His power! Think of the unseen world alone, the Heaven of the angels. God knows each one; He preserves each one in existence; He guides and directs each one; He is adored by each one. How great is not the Majesty of God! "Who is like to Thee among the strong, O Lord? Who is like to Thee, glorious in holiness, terrible and praiseworthy, doing wonders?" (Exodus xv, 11). To speak reverently of God's name, therefore, means to show respect and reverence to this great God, to His infinite Majesty, to His infinite Perfections.

I have just told you God's proper name, which He Himself revealed to Moses. He is also called the "Strong" or "Mighty One," the "Most High," the

"Holy," the "Lord" (of hosts or armies), etc. In the New Testament God is called the "Father," the "Son," and the "Holy Ghost," "Jesus Christ," the "Saviour and Redeemer," etc. The second Commandment commands us to pronounce these sacred names reverently and devoutly, because they stand for God Himself.

b) Dear children, if we really have reverence for God, we will also be most careful to speak with respect and reverence of all that is near and dear to God. And that means, in the first place, that we will revere the names of God's chosen servants and friends, the Saints. It means, in the second place, that we will be most careful to speak with the greatest respect of all things, which are especially consecrated to God and to God's service. Consequently we will reverence also the words, Cross, Sacrament, Heaven, Grace, Prayer, Bible, etc. Our Catechism says: **We are commanded by the second Commandment to speak with reverence of the Saints, and of all holy things.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

2. But *how* may we show honor and reverence to God's name?—Just recall that solemn procession of the Jews, that went forth from Jerusalem to meet the pagan king, Alexander the Great. What do you think that the High Priest, the priests and the faithful, were doing as they marched to meet the king?—They were singing and praying to the Lord God with all their hearts. Their thoughts went back to the numberless times that the mighty hand of God had protected them against their enemies. Therefore they praised the Divine Majesty in grateful prayer and song. Devoutly they invoked the name of God to help them now in their dire need. They were not afraid to call upon that name publicly before all. On the contrary, they steadfastly confessed that name before all the world. And by this public confession of reverence they moved the pagan king, too, to do honor to that adorable name. That is how we may show honor to God's name. *We honor and revere the name of God by gratefully prais-*

ing it, steadfastly confessing it and exerting ourselves to promote its honor. (Repeat together).

Do you know of any society whose special purpose it is to revere and respect God's holy name?—Yes, the *Holy Name Society.* Just think of the countless thousands of men and boys, who have joined that holy union for the noble purpose of showing honor and reverence to this all-holy name, and of preventing, as far as they are able, every profanation of this awful name! Frequently the members of the Holy Name Society march in public procession through the streets of our cities, to make open confession of their veneration for God's name and at the same time thereby inviting others to join with them in promoting the honor of the Lord's name. What a noble society! How it must please the Lord God, and Jesus Christ, the Saviour of mankind. What a solemn reminder to all, who profane that name by careless and downright abuse!

(There are several other ways in which we can show respect and honor to God's name, as we shall learn in a later lesson. Thus at times Christians call upon God's holy name to bear witness that what they are saying is really true. They *swear.* At other times Christians promise God that they will do a work that is pleasing to Him. They make *vows.* But more of this in another lesson).

Write on the blackboard:

1. "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain."
2. Duties of second Commandment:
   a) to speak reverently of God:
   b) to speak reverently of the Saints, and holy things.

Synthesis. Let us review the lesson we have learned today. What is the second Commandment? What words did God add to this Commandment? How did the Jews show their reverence for God's name? Did

the pagans, too, honor God's name? Give me one example. What do we mean by God's name. When we honor God's name, do we honor the mere word? To whom is the honor directed? Tell me some of the names of God in the Old Testament; in the New Testament. What other names must we respect? Why? How can we show our respect for God's name? *(Have the pupils read the answers from the Catechism. Assign the lesson for the next class).*

Application. 1. Once the Prophet Isaias was permitted to look into Heaven. There he saw the Lord seated upon His throne of glory surrounded by the choirs of Angels and the company of the Saints. They all bowed down in deepest reverence, adoring the Almighty and singing unceasingly that wonderfully beautiful hymn of praise: "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of hosts! Heaven and earth are full of Thy glory, Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost! As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be world without end. Amen." That is how the Angels and the Saints honored God's holy name!— When the Son of God was born at Bethlehem, Angels resplendent with heavenly majesty descended from above to earth and praised God, saying: "Glory be to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men of good will!" What an example to us! That, too, is our duty every day of our earthly life; and that, too, some day, will be our duty in Heaven.

2. You have learned how we can honor God's name. And you can fulfil that duty every single day. For instance, if you meet a priest, you can say quietly: "Praised be Jesus Christ!" You are thereby showing honor to God Almighty in the person of His priest. What a beautiful Catholic custom! Frequently in the day or in the silence of the night you can recite a little ejaculatory prayer. For instance, you can say: "Sweet Heart of Jesus, grant that I may love Thee more and more!" "O Jesus, for Thee do I live; for Thee will I die; Thine I am in life and death!" "Glory be to the

Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be world without end. Amen." How ought you to begin every work?—You should say quietly: "My Jesus, I will do this for love of Thee and to please Thee!" Or you might say: "In the name of God!" What blessings would not those simple prayers bring down upon you from God's throne above!—When the devil tempts you to sin, invoke the name of God. What can you say?—"O Jesus, help me!" "O Mary, assist me!" "Sweet Guardian Angel, protect me!"

But never forget, dear children, that you must always pronounce those sacred names *devoutly and reverently,* otherwise you will not please God and His Saints. Be devout, especially at your prayers. God wants us to honor His name as do the Angels and the Saints of Heaven. In order that we might be able to do that, the Saviour Himself taught us in the Our Father how to pray: "Hallowed be Thy name!" If we pray devoutly, God will be pleased with us and hear our prayers.

3. Now let me ask you a serious question?—Have you always spoken the Lord's name as you should? Make a *little examination of conscience* now. Resolve to do better for the future. Let us close this class with an act of reverence for God's Holy name. *(Have the pupils sing or recite the hymn:* "Holy God we praise Thy name!").

LESSON XV.

Oaths—Perjury.

Catechetical Unit:

1) What is an oath? L. XXXII, Q. 347.

2) What are we commanded by the second Commandment? L. XXXII, Q. 346 (second part).

3) When may we take an oath? L. XXXII, Q. 348.

4) What is necessary to make an oath lawful? L. XXXII, Q. 349.

5) What is forbidden by the second Commandment? L. XXXII, Q. 352 (first part).

Preparation. Dear children, St. Francis of Assisi always pronounced the name of God with profound reverence. If by chance he saw lying on the ground a piece of paper on which the name of God was written, he would pick it up and carefully put it in his cell. He also counseled his disciples to do likewise. Is not that a beautiful example for us all? Let us first review the lesson on the reverence we owe to the holy name. *(Question the pupils briefly on the preceding lesson).* —If man had remained in the glorious state of holiness and justice, in which Almighty God had placed him in the beginning, this world of ours would be a far different place to live in. St. John Chrysostom says, that after the sin of our first parents evil spread far and wide. Everything was turned topsy-turvy; faith and loyalty gradually disappeared from among men. Corruption and untruthfulness held sway over the minds and hearts of men. Consequently, since men were no longer willing to believe other men's words, the only means of securing order and certainty among men was to call upon God to be witness to the truth of what men said. That means, that men had recourse to oaths.

Aim. Today I am going to speak to you about *oaths;* I intend to tell you how conscientious every Christian ought to be when he takes an oath, and how sinful it is to swear falsely or without necessity.

Presentation. Once there was a certain very conscientious man, who held the office of judge in one of our large cities. He considered the taking of oaths a very serious matter. He never neglected to impress upon the party, who was about to take an oath, the holiness of that act.

Now it happened that an old man, seventy years of age, was ordered to appear in court to stand trial be-

fore this judge for a dishonorable crime. Several witnesses appeared and swore: "I swear to God, the All-knowing One, that I shall tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. So help me God!" Their testimonies were so definite and weighty, that the old man was all but convicted. The judge, therefore, asked him, saying: "Do you confess your guilt?" But he replied: "I am prepared to take an oath, that I am innocent!" The judge warned and cautioned the accused person, saying: "Consider well what you are about to do! An oath is a sacred matter. You call God Himself to be your witness. Think of God's eternal punishments! If you are conscious of guilt, do not dare to swear!" But the accused man protested: "My conscience is free from guilt. I will swear." "Very well, then," replied the judge, "here is the crucifix. Raise the three fingers of your right hand and repeat after me: I swear," Without hesitation the old man repeated the words: "I swear." Then the judge paused and said for the second time: "I admonish you, keep to the truth! You are standing not merely before an earthly judge, but before the All-knowing God. Think of the awful consequences of a false oath (perjury)! There is still time to openly acknowledge your guilt." But the man insisted: "I am innocent." And again he raised his hand to swear. Again the judge began: "I swear." The accused repeated after him the words: "I swear." Once more the judge paused and said with touching earnestness: "You are an old man of seventy years. Think of your grey hairs! You are already with one foot in the grave. Your days will soon be all numbered. Then you will stand before the judgment-seat of God. Speak the truth, therefore!" But again the man insisted upon his innocence. Therefore for the third time the judge began, saying: "I swear—." At that very moment the right hand of the Christ on the crucifix fell down. Pale and trembling with fear the old man stood there; then he let his right hand fall and said: "No, I will not swear." And he confessed his guilt.

Explanation. That is a remarkable story. Let us think about it a little more.

1. An old man of seventy years is about to be judged in the city court. First the witnesses are called upon to testify. They must tell what they know. But the matter is not yet evident enough; there is still a little doubt and uncertainty. What is to be done? There is only one more means of getting at the truth. That is to call upon God Himself to be the witness. Of course, God is present everywhere. He sees all things, even though not a single man knows anything about it; for He is omniscient. This All-knowing God the accused person wanted to call upon to witness to the truth of his words. Do you see? That is taking an oath. **An oath is the calling upon God to witness the truth of what we say.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard; see the diagram below just above the synthesis). (Assertory* oath: to call upon God to witness to the truth of a present or past event). A person can also make a promise to another and call upon God to witness the truth of that promise; that is also an oath. (In a *promissory* oath we call God to witness to some future event).

From our story you also see, *how one may swear.* A person who takes an oath raises his right hand and says: "I swear before God, the All-knowing One!" Formerly a crucifix and two lighted candles stood upon the table before the person about to swear, just as upon the altar. That was indeed serious and solemn. Now the person who swears merely raises his right hand and speaks the words or places his right hand on the Holy Bible. But even though these solemn ceremonies are absent, the oath is, none the less, just as sacred and serious a matter.

2. Many people have imagined that to take an oath is a sin. According to that opinion the witnesses of our story would also have sinned. It is true, that Christ once said: "I say to you not to swear at all. Let your speech be yea, yea: no, no: and that which is over

and above these is of evil" (Matt. v, 3s). Jesus means to say: Christians ought to be so truthful and sincere towards one another, that they ought not to be obliged to swear at all. That would, indeed, be proper and beautiful. But, as a matter of fact, all men are not so honorable and conscientious; one may not believe and trust everybody upon his word. Therefore an oath is necessary and not a sin. Yes, *a truthful oath is even an act of religion.* Do you know why?—Whoever swears to the truth, thereby publicly and solemnly professes: What I say is indeed true: as true as that there is a God in Heaven! The All-knowing God knows that I speak the truth; may the just God punish me, if I tell the untruth. Do you see? When a person swears the truth, he publicly and solemnly professes: I believe, that there is a God in Heaven. I believe, that God is All-knowing. I believe that God is just. A truthful oath is, therefore, a beautiful profession of Faith. Now we can easily see, that if it is allowed by the second Commandment of God to take an oath, there is likewise a duty on our part of faithfully keeping our lawful oaths. **We are commanded by the second Commandment to keep our lawful oaths.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

3. *But when may we take an oath?*—a) That old man of our story was cited by lawful authority to appear in court and answer the charges made against him. Certain witnesses, too, were ordered by the same authority to swear to the truth of what they knew. Is it lawful under such circumstances to swear?—Yes; for whenever lawful authority, whether in court or outside of court, commands for weighty reasons, it is perfectly right and lawful to swear. Thus too city, state and federal officials, judges, soldiers, etc., when entering upon their duties, swear that they will faithfully perform their duties to the best of their ability. That is right. **We may take an oath when it is ordered by lawful authority.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

b) You have already heard that in the early days

of the Christian religion the Christians were cited before the pagan judges, who ordered them under solemn oath to state whether or not they were followers of Jesus Christ. Now if these Christians had refused to take an oath under these circumstances, would they not have dishonored God most grievously? Surely the honor of God demanded that they openly profess their Faith in Christ. **We may take an oath when it is required for God's honor.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

c) Let us suppose that that old man of our story had really never committed that crime of which he was accused. Would he have had a right to swear that he was innocent?—He most certainly would have been allowed to do so. Everyone has a right to defend his good name, his safety and his life. And if an oath is necessary to obtain that end, it is certainly allowed to take an oath. **We may take an oath when it is required for our own good.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

d) Let me see whether you can think correctly. We will suppose that the old man of our story was innocent, and that one of his neighbors knew that he was innocent of the crime, because he happened to see others commit that crime. Would that neighbor have been allowed to take an oath in court and defend the old man? He certainly would have been allowed; nay more, he would have been obliged to take that oath. Why? Because his neighbor's good required it. "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you!" **We may take an oath when it is required for our neighbor's good.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

4. Now you can understand what is required to make an oath lawful. Those witnesses of our story swore to what they knew to be true; they had a sufficient reason for swearing, for they were called upon by lawful authority. Therefore, they swore a lawful oath. Our Catechism says: **To make an oath lawful**

it is necessary that what we swear to be true, and that there be a sufficient cause for taking an oath. *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

5. a) But there are also bad oaths. We see that, too, from our story. The old man had guilt upon his soul. And yet, he said in court: "I am innocent: I am ready to swear that I am innocent!" Therefore he lied most wickedly. Yes, he already had the oath upon his lips; twice he had already said: "I swear!" At the last moment God Himself intervened in a miraculous manner. Otherwise the old sinner would have really sealed his lie with an oath. To swear to an untruth is a false oath—perjury—and a sin against the second Commandment of God. **The second Commandment forbids all false oaths.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

b) Now just look again at the witnesses in that trial. They took an oath; but they kept to the truth. However, let us suppose that one of these witnesses knew about the matter; he saw the evil deed being committed.But he did not recognize the man accurately; yes, perhaps it may have been some other man, whom he saw. Therefore he is *in doubt.* Nevertheless, he takes the oath, saying: "It was he!" What do you think of such an oath?—He swore without knowing for certain whether it is really so or not. He took a rash oath, and committed a sin against the second Commandment. **The second Commandment forbids all rash oaths.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).* Afterwards it turns out that the man is really guilty. What do you think of that oath now?—That witness has, nevertheless, committed the sin of taking a rash oath; for one is never allowed to swear when one is in doubt.

c) When a person is condemned in court, frequently bitter enmity is the result. I do not know whether that was the case in our story; but it is possible. What does a person do in anger under those circumstances? —He swears to take revenge upon his enemies: "I will never forget all who have brought this disgrace and

punishment upon me. As truly as there is a God in Heaven, they shall hear from me!" What do you think of such an oath?—If a person resolved to do that in all earnestness, simply made that resolution in his own mind, he would be committing a sin, a most wicked sin. But to swear to do wrong and to omit to do good, for instance, to swear not to pray any more or not to go to church or to neglect the Sacraments, is a crime against God, a real blasphemy. Such an oath is an unjust oath, and a sin against the second Commandment. **The second Commandment forbids all unjust oaths.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

d) The old man of our story was cited to appear in court to stand trial on a serious charge. But often it is a question of a mere trifle, a matter of little moment or importance. Now judge for yourselves: Is it lawful to have recourse to God for every little trifle, and to call upon Him to be a witness to the truth when it is a matter of little concern? — That would be most ridiculous; for no one is allowed to trifle with Almighty God. It is not without good reason, then, that the second Commandment says: "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain!" Such an oath is an unnecessary oath. **The second Commandment forbids all unnecessary oaths.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).* Of course, if the court demands such an oath, one is obliged by reason of obedience to take the oath; but in that case it would not be a sin.

6. But why is perjury such a *grievous sin,* yes a crime?—You see, that man lied most wickedly in court. He knew very well that God had seen him commit that crime; and yet, God was to bear witness that he was innocent. Is not that a mockery of the All-knowing God? This sinner knew also very well: God is just and punishes this wicked deed. But he thought to himself: What of it? God should help me to lie; He will not punish me any way! Is not such conduct a mockery of the just God? Is not that a malicious deed, that cries to Heaven for vengeance?—*Perjury, especi-*

ally in a court of justice, is one of the greatest crimes; because he who commits it mocks God's Omniscience, Sanctity and Justice.

But that is not all by any means. A perjurer says, when he swears: "So help me God!" He means to say: "If what I say is not true, may God abandon me. God need not help me any more; may His vengeance strike me! You see, therefore, that *perjury, especially in a court of justice, is one of the greatest crimes; because he who commits it almost solemnly renounces God, and calls down His vengeance upon himself.*— How is it possible for a person to dare to trifle with God in that way! How dare a person trifle so insolently with his immortal soul! God Himself showed very clearly what a crime perjury is, when the arm of the Crucified Saviour fell down before the eyes of that sinner. That acted like a clap of thunder from the heavens: Hold thou criminal! Otherwise My avenging anger will strike thee.

Perjury is, therefore, a crime against God, but often, too, it is a crime against one's neighbor. Why? How easily it might happen, that one may cause untold injury to an innocent person's honor, possessions, liberty yes, even cause him to lose his life! How can a perjurer make good again what he has destroyed? And yet he must, as far as he is able, make restitution for all the injury he has caused. That is a sacred duty of conscience; otherwise he cannot hope for pardon either in this life or in the next. How foolish it is to commit the crime of perjury!

Write on the blackboard:

1. Oath (to swear)—to call God to witness to truth of what we say.

2. Oaths are lawful:
   a) when ordered by lawful authority;
   b) when required for God's honor;
   c) when required for our own good;

d) when required for our neighbor's good.

3. Oaths to be lawful must
   a) be true;
   b) there must be a sufficient cause.

4. Sins against the 2nd Commandment:
   a) false; b) rash; c) unjust; d) unnecessary oaths.

Synthesis. Now you know how a Christian ought to look upon taking an oath or swearing. That is an important teaching. To swear truthfully is not a sin, but to swear falsely is a grievous sin. What is an oath? How does a person swear? When may a person swear? When are oaths lawful? When are oaths sinful? Against what Commandment are these sins? *(Have the pupils read the answers from the Catechism. Assign the lesson for the next class).*

Application. 1. Have you, too, perhaps taken an oath at some time or other? Many children say frequently without thinking: "Upon my word of honor!" That is not meant as an oath, but it is, nevertheless, careless and sinful speech. I have, also, heard people say: "I hope to die, if what I say is not true!" or "May the devil take me if I tell the untruth!" or "May I never have another healthy hour, if I do not keep my promise!" That is not an oath, but it is sinful cursing, nevertheless. I would not like to speak such words for anything in the world; I would be afraid that God might take me at my word and make that curse come true.

2. There are various *kinds of oaths.* There is, first, the *assertory oath,* by which a person swears to the truth of what he asserts or says. Where do such oaths take place especially?—Then there are *promissory* oaths, by which a person promises to fulfil in the future something or other. Who must take such an oath?—Finally there are also *imprecatory oaths,* by which a person asks God to punish him, if he does not

fulfil what he swears. Soldiers, too, take an *oath of loyalty* to the flag. If a soldier, therefore, deserts from the army, he proves himself disloyal to the President or Ruler, and at the same time he is unfaithful to God. The Lord will punish him; he cannot escape from God. A Christian must, therefore, look upon a promissory oath as a sacred duty of conscience.

3. One may never swear evil. Who acted in that manner?—Herod said to the daughter of Herodias: "Ask of me what thou wilt, and I will give it thee" (Mark vi, 22). And he swore to her: "Whatsoever thou shalt ask I will give it to thee, though it be the half of my kingdom!" What did the wicked girl ask for?—Herod actually kept his oath and ordered John to be beheaded.

4. In the Bible History there is mention several times of perjury.—False witnesses rose up against Christ. What lies did they swear against Jesus?—Peter asserted under oath: "I know not this man!"—Two men took a false oath against Naboth, saying: "He hath blasphemed God and the King!" Then Naboth was led forth and stoned to death. Do you see what evil a perjurer can cause? No wonder, then, that we read in the Holy Scripture: "Thus saith the Lord of hosts: The oath shall come to the house of him that sweareth falsely in My name, and it shall remain in the midst of his house, and shall consume it, with the timber thereof, and the stones thereof" (Zach. v, 4). Neither am I surprised, if the court of justice punishes perjury so severely. A perjurer is condemned to a long term in prison. In like manner whoever leads another to commit perjury is also subject to a long prison term. That is not too severe. God punishes perjury with a prison term, from which one can never escape.

Perhaps later on you will be asked to take an oath before the court. Then perhaps wicked people will say to you: "Do not get me into trouble! Say so and so!"

Yes, perhaps they will even threaten you, saying: "If you get me into trouble, it will go hard with you." Do not allow such people to persuade you to do wrong, and do not let them frighten you. Speak out plainly and without fear: "I will tell the truth. I will not be guilty of perjury!"

LESSON XVI.

Vows.

Catechetical Unit:

1) What is a vow? L. XXXII, Q. 350.
2) What are we commanded by the second Commandment? L. XXXII, Q. 346 (third part).
3) It is a sin not to fulfil our vows? L. XXXII, Q. 351.

Preparation. Dear children, the name of God is often profaned by false swearing. Let us first review what we have learned about that in the last class. *(Question the pupils briefly on the preceding lesson).* —Whoever promises another something under oath, must fulfil his promise; that is a duty of conscience. But a simple promise, too, one must keep; that is a duty of honor. Of course, people promise much, but keep little. To promise and not to keep one's promise is a sin. You know that God is faithful.—The Christian, too, ought to be faithful. One ought to be able to place trust and confidence in the word of a Christian just as one can rely upon God's word. For the true Christian ought to be an image of God.—Whoever promises or vows something to God must keep what he promises or vows. If a person breaks his word, he offends God. This sin belongs to the second Commandment.

Aim. That is what I shall show you today: *how conscientious a Christian ought to be in regard to vows.* But first I shall give you an example of how a noble

prince made a vow to God and how faithfully he kept it. This prince is the pious Landgrave Louis of Thuringia, the husband of St. Elizabeth. We have already heard of these two persons before. (Cf. Lesson III).

Presentation. In the days when Louis ruled in Thuringia, the Holy Land was in the hands of the Turks. Emperor Frederick II announced a Crusade (1227). He wished to free the Holy Land from the power of the infidels and establish there a holy kingdom. As soon as Louis had heard of this order, he became all enthusiastic over it, for in his bosom there beat a pious and truly Christian heart. Quickly his resolution was made: "I may not remain behind; God calls me!" But since that was a very serious and important matter, he first asked his Bishop for advice. The Bishop praised the noble courage of the Landgrave. Henceforth Louis hesitated not an instant longer. "God wills it!" he exclaimed. Then he promised God: "I promise to travel to the Holy Land and to fight for God's holy cause!" In token of his vow he received from the Bishop a red cross. This sign of the cross was fastened on his right shoulder. By it all recognized the Crusader. However, the Landgrave still kept the secret to himself; for he did not dare to tell his wife anything about it; he was afraid of wounding her good heart. For that reason he hid the cross for the time being under his cloak.

One evening as both of them sat together engaged in confidential conversation, Elizabeth suddenly discovered the red cross. Instantly her eyes were opened: Louis has vowed the Crusade. She was as though struck down by a bolt of lightning. If her husband had suddenly fallen dead at her feet, her terror would not have been greater. Evil presentiments began to rise in her soul: "Soon I shall lose him entirely!" And she fell to the floor in a faint. Frightened the Landgrave raised her up and tried to quiet her. He pointed to God's holy will, saying: "I am going to make the Crusade for love of Jesus Christ; surely you will not ob-

ject to that!" For a long time Elizabeth did not utter a single word, but only wept. But finally she said: "Dear brother, if it is not against God's holy will, remain with me!" Louis answered: "Dear sister, permit me to go; for I have vowed it!" Thereupon the pious woman resigned herself to the holy will of God, and said: "I will not hold you back against God's Commandment. I have made a sacrifice of myself and of yourself to the Lord. Go in God's name!" Soon afterwards the Landgrave left his home; but he never returned again to his home. On the way to the Holy Land he died, a victim of his vow.

Explanation. 1. a) When the Emperor announced the Crusade many brave knights joyfully answered his call. They left all things: house and home, father and mother, wife and children; yes, they were prepared to sacrifice even their life for God's holy cause. That was a pious deed. Surely God was pleased with it. The noble Landgrave Louis, too, was all enthusiastic over it. When he heard the news, what was his first thought? —"I too, would like to be among them!" Was that already a vow? No, that was merely *a pious wish.* He was still free and he could have remained quietly at home.—For a time Louis carried that plan about with him in his heart. But he could no longer get rid of the thought: "How beautiful it would be to become a Crusader!" But then his resolution was made: "I will go to the holy war!" Was that now a vow?—No, that was as yet only *a pious intention, a good resolution.* The Landgrave was still free; he could have changed his resolution, without committing a sin.

b) But he did not stop long at a mere resolution. The noble prince took the last step and promised God: "I will become a Crusader." Now he had made a deliberate promise to God. He knew full well what he was doing. He thought over what he intended to do; then he deliberately promised to do something pleasing to God. He had made a vow. **A vow is a deliberate promise made to God to do something pleasing to God.**

(Repeat together; use the blackboard; see the diagram below just above the synthesis).—The Landgrave had pledged his word to God; now he could no longer step back; he was bound in conscience to fulfil that promise. —But do you think that the noble knight made that promise in vain? Whoever promises God anything, will be rewarded a thousand times by God for it, for God is a generous rewarder. He pays with a heavenly reward. And if a person even loses his life as Louis did for God's sake, he surely will find eternal life instead. Jesus has said so Himself: "He that shall lose his life for Me, shall find it" (Matt. v, 39).

2. But tell me, why did the Landgrave vow the Crusade?—No one had obliged him to do that. Neither did God require this sacrifice. That was an entirely free matter. Only his own Christian, pious disposition and his own noble heart urged him to become a Crusader. Do you see? A vow is a *free, a voluntary promise* made to God. A vow made under compulsion, or against one's free will, would be invalid in God's sight.

Of course, a person can also vow to God something, that is already a duty or an obligation. A lukewarm Christian has hitherto neglected to fulfil his duty on a Sunday. Now he wants to go to Confession. What must he resolve to do?—But the poor sinner does not quite trust himself; he is afraid, that he might soon fall back again into his old carelessness. What, then, does he do? During Holy Communion he prays in this way: "My Jesus, now things must become different with me! Henceforth never will I miss Holy Mass again on a Sunday. I vow that; I solemnly promise that." He is now, of course, obliged to assist at Mass on Sundays for a twofold reason: first, because of the Commandment and secondly, because of the vow. If he perseveres faithfully, he will also receive a double reward from Heaven; if he breaks his word, he commits a double sin.—Now you see, that a person may make a promise to God in regard to something, which he is free to do, or in regard to a matter, which he is

obliged to perform. Remember, therefore, that a *vow is a deliberate promise made to God to do something that is pleasing to God.*

3. When Elizabeth discovered the pious intention or resolution of her husband, she was grieved unto death. Her heart bled for sorrow and bitter pain at the thought, that perhaps very soon she would lose her beloved spouse. Therefore I can very easily understand her childlike and heartfelt prayer: "Dear brother, if it is not against God's will, stay with me!" I believe that these words burned into the soul of the noble Landgrave like fire. However, he could not, and he would not, be unfaithful to his promise. It is a sacred duty to keep one's vow. Our Catechism teaches: **We are commanded by the second Commandment to keep our lawful vows.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

4. a) Therefore Louis said to Elizabeth: "Dear sister, permit me to depart, for I have vowed to go!" When Elizabeth heard that: "I have vowed," she dared not make any further objection. On the contrary she replied: "Then I will not keep you back. I have made a sacrifice of myself and you to God!" These were beautiful and truly Christian words. This pious woman knew very well what is written in the Scriptures: "If thou hast vowed anything to God, defer not to pay it; it is much better not to vow, than after a vow not to perform it" (Ecclesiastes v, 3s). Yes, it is no sin not to vow; but not to fulfil a vow is a sin. **Not to fulfil our vows is a sin.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

b). But *what kind of a sin* is it, not to fufil one's vows?—Louis promised something very serious. For to promise to leave his wife, his home and possessions; yes, to endanger his life in battle, is surely a very serious matter. Therefore the nature of his vow was serious. Moreover, Louis intended to bind himself under pain of mortal sin to fulfil that vow. Consequently, if the noble Louis had neglected to fulfil his vow, he would have been guilty of a mortal sin. But, let us

suppose that he promised to do something pleasing to God, that was a mere trifle, for example, to recite ten Our Fathers and ten Hail Marys once a day for a week. The nature of that vow would, of course, not be serious or grievous. That vow would have been of an unimportant nature. Moreover, Louis most probably would not intend to bind himself under mortal sin to fulfil that vow. Therefore under these circumstances if the Landgrave had neglected to fulfil that vow, he would have committed only a venial sin. The kind of sin that one commits by not fulfiling one's vow, therefore, depends upon what one promises, a matter of slight or grievous importance, and upon the intention. **Not to fulfil our vows is a sin, mortal or venial, according to the nature of the vow and the intention we had in making it.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

But sometimes it happens, that a person cannot keep his vow. The Landgrave Louis, too, did not fulfil his vow. He did not get to the Holy Land at all; for he died in Italy. To be sure, he did not commit any sin; death released him from his vow. Even his illness would have freed him from his vow. For surely a sick man cannot go to battle. You see, therefore, that *it is a sacred duty to keep one's vows, unless it is impossible to do so.* For God does not demand impossible things.

Write on the blackboard:

1. Vow—a deliberate promise made to God to do something pleasing to Him.
2. Second Commandment demands the fulfilment of vows.
3. Sin—not to fulfil our vows.

Synthesis. Many a man begins to doubt as to whether he has taken a vow, or only a good resolution. Therefore, remember well what we have learned today in regard to vows. What is a vow? The good deed, which we vow to do, can be free or something which we are obliged to perform. Are we obliged to make a vow? Are we obliged to fulfil our vows? What kind of a sin is it not to fulfil our vows? Against what Com-

mandment is that sin? How can we distinguish a resolution from a vow? A resolution concerns me alone, but a vow concerns God. In a resolution a person says: I will do it! In a vow a person says: I promise to do it! A person *ought* to keep his good resolutions; but a person *must* keep his vows. Not to keep one's resolutions is not a sin; but not to keep one's vow is a sin. *(Have the pupils read the answers from the Catechism. Assign the lesson for the next class).*

Application. 1. To make a vow is a good thing, but also a serious matter. One may not, therefore, go about making vows carelessly. What did the Landgrave Louis do before making the vow? — He thought over the matter first carefully and thoroughly; then besides that he also asked the Bishop for advice. That is the proper thing to do. Whoever wishes to make a vow ought first to ask himself in all earnestness: Am I also able to keep this vow? In important matters he ought also to ask his Confessor for advice: Is it proper for me to make this vow? To make a vow is indeed an easy matter; but to keep it is sometimes a very difficult matter. Was it not a difficult sacrifice for the Landgrave to make?—When St. Francis of Sales was still a young man, he made a vow to say the Rosary every day. He kept that vow too, most conscientiously. But once he said in his later years: "I would not do it again." But why not? Was not that a pious deed pleasing to God? Of course; but the Saint became a Bishop and often he had so much work to do, that he could scarcely find time to keep his vow.

2. Many people are ready at once to make vows. For example, they happen to be sick, or in trouble; immediately they vow to undertake a pilgrimage to this or that shrine. Many a one has bitterly rued such hasty vows later on. Luther was still a student of the university. Once he was overtaken in the open fields by a frightful thunder shower. To the right and the left of him the lightning bolts crashed to the earth. In mortal terror of death he vowed, that if he should

get home safely he would enter a convent as a religious. He kept his promise. But that was a misfortune for him. Perhaps if he had not done that, he would never have become a heretic and caused so much scandal and havoc to Holy Church.—Another person has made a vow in haste. Only afterwards does he realize it: "I cannot keep that vow; it is too difficult for me." How can he be helped in that case?—The Pope is Christ's Vicar on earth. To him did Christ say: "Whatsoever thou shalt loose upon earth, shall be loosed also in Heaven." Therefore our Holy Father can release one from a vow or change it into some other good work. The Bishops, too, can do the same thing.—Consequently one must be very careful in making vows. Many a person promising a thing hastily, afterwards bitterly rues having done that. Therefore do not be hasty and thoughtless in making promises. But if you have promised certain things to other children, keep your promises faithfully! "I want to be a man of my word!" that is what every child ought to think to himself.

3. (Let me give you a *few more examples of vows!* Jacob fled from the face of his brother Esau. In a dream he saw the wonderful ladder reaching from earth to Heaven. He vowed: "If God will be with me, and preserve me in the way, by which I shall walk, and will give me bread to eat and raiment to put on, and I shall return prosperously to my father's house: the Lord shall be my God, and this stone, which is set up for a title, shall be called the house of God." (Gen. xviii, 20s). He kept his word; he built an altar and offered sacrifices to the Lord God.—Do you know whence come the *processions*, which are held from time to time in the Church, and during which the people recite the Rosary and other prayers? They owe their origin to a vow. About 1400 years ago in the city of Vienne, France, there was terrible distress; it was a punishment from God. Then the saintly Bishop Mamertus, in propitiation for sin, vowed together with his people to hold solemn processions for three consecutive

days. And behold, God turned away the rod of His punishment from the people. Soon afterwards these processions began to be held everywhere. We have them even today on the Rogation-days before the Feast of Christ's Ascension into Heaven.—You all have already heard of the *Passion Play of Oberammergau,* which occurs every ten years in that little village in Bavaria, Germany. In the year 1633 a frightful angel of destruction passed through Bavaria—the pest. In their dire need the good people of Oberammergau vowed the Passion Play. From that hour not a single person died of that disease. Thus you see, how much God thinks of a vow.—You have already seen a *religious,* a man or a woman belonging to some religious order or congregation. The religious offer themselves entirely to God as a sacrifice. They want to follow Jesus in all things. Therefore they vow freely *poverty,* perpetual *chastity* and perfect *obedience* to their lawful superiors. These are indeed great sacrifices; but they will also at some time receive a great reward in Heaven. Has one of you, perhaps, a desire or an inclination to the religious life? That would indeed be a great grace and a good fortune. But such a child ought to pray diligently, otherwise he might lose that happiness).

LESSON XVII.

Blasphemy, Cursing and Profanity.

Catechetical Unit:

What is forbidden by the second Commandment? L. XXXII, Q. 352 (second part).

Preparation. Dear children, in the second Commandment the Lord God commands us to honor and revere His holy name, by speaking respectfully of God and of His Saints, and of all sacred things; also by keeping our lawful oaths and vows. In the last lesson we learned about vows. Let us first review this teaching. *(Question the pupils briefly on the preceding lesson).*

—Many sins are committed against the second Commandment. We have already heard about false, rash, unjust and unnecessary oaths. It is also sinful to neglect to fulfil one's vows. Our Catechism speaks of other sins against the second Commandment.

Aim. Today I am going to show you how a person can profane God's name by *blasphemy, cursing and profanity.*

Presentation. *I. Blasphemy.*

On Good Friday the Jews succeeded in having Jesus condemned to death. The Saviour was led out of the Holy City to Mount Calvary. There the Roman soldiers stripped Him of His garments and nailed Him to the Cross. The soldiers seated themselves beneath the Cross, and kept guard, lest anyone should try to remove the body of Jesus from the Cross before He had expired. Jesus' enemies crowded about the Cross and revenged themselves by loading Him with vile jeers and hideous abuse. Foremost in the ranks of the rabble were those lying witnesses, that the Sanhedrin had produced the night before. They passed and repassed before the Cross, wagging their heads in sign of contempt, blaspheming and reminding the Christ of the calumnies, to which He had fallen a victim. "Vah! Thou that wouldst destroy the Temple of God, and rebuild it in three days, come, save Thyself, and descend from the Cross!" Others hurled the challenge at Jesus: "If Thou art the Son of God, come down from the Cross!" The priests, too, sneered, saying: "He hath saved others; but He cannot save Himself!" Then raising their eyes to the sign attached to the Cross above Jesus' Head, they cried out: "Let the Christ, the King of Israel, forthwith descend from His Cross, so that we may see Him, and believe in Him! He hath put His trust in God; let Him deliver Him, for He said: I am the Son of God!" The soldiers and the rabble shouted: "If Thou art the King of the Jews, now save Thyself!" Then the thief to the left of the Saviour took up their blasphemies, and cried out: "If

Thou art the Christ, save Thyself and save us!" *(Show the pupils a large picture of this scene).*

Explanation. 1. Oh! what deep sorrow must not Jesus have suffered during those three terrible hours on the Cross of Calvary. He was undergoing most awful torture in Body and Soul; but He endured it all out of His own free choice. What did the Jews call out to Him?—What did the Roman soldiers shout?—Yes, these bitter enemies of the Saviour meant to say: "Thou hast claimed to be the Son of God; but Thou canst do nothing. Thou canst not even help Thyself!" Therefore they scoffed at God's holy name and ridiculed that all-holy name. They uttered contemptuous and abusive language against God Almighty. That is the sin of blasphemy. But it is likewise blasphemy to speak in a contemptuous and abusive manner about God's chosen friends and servants, the Saints, or about anything that is near and dear to God, about sacred things. Why? Because an insult offered to the Saints, or to sacred things, for instance, the Sacraments, the Church, prayer, Holy Water, etc., is an insult offered to God Himself. For is it not due to God, that the Saints are holy, and that sacred things are worthy of our reverence? Yes, all holiness comes from God. What then is blasphemy? *By blasphemy is meant contemptuous and abusive language uttered against God, the Saints, or sacred things. (Repeat together).*

That is what happens in Hell; for there God's name is blasphemed day and night. Blasphemy is the peculiar language of the devils and the damned. St. John says: "They (the damned) bit their tongues for pain, and they blasphemed the God in Heaven, because of their pain and wounds" (Apoc. xvi, 10). Dear children, may you never so far forget yourselves as to commit this awful sin!

2. But this sin does not always arise from infidelity or hatred of God; it is due, too, frequently to anger or passion. For instance, when things do not go right or when something unpleasant happens, some people im-

mediately begin to speak contemptuously and abusively of God and holy things. They say: "Oh! God is unjust"; or "God does not care at all about what is happening to me"; or "What good is prayer: one cannot live from prayer"; or "The Saints were not a bit better than other people"; or "the Bible contains many falsehoods"; or "the Catholic religion is the invention of the priests"; or "the ceremonies of the Church are mummery and superstition"; or they laugh about Confession, the Holy Mass, the use of Holy Water, etc. Dear children, a spark of the fire of Hell has fallen into the hearts of such people! That is a very bad sign. Is not God able to set things aright again? Is He not Almighty? Does He not watch over us every single moment of our life? It is particularly in times of misfortune, that we ought to place our trust and faith in God. Yes, in the words of the Psalmist, we ought to say: "Though I should walk in the midst of the shadow of death, I will not fear, for Thou art with me" (XXII, 4). Whoever commits this sin with full reflection and consent, is guilty of one of the greatest and most grievous sins. The Scripture says: "They shall be condemned that shall blaspheme Thee" (Tobias xiii, 16). Our Catechism says: **The second Commandment forbids blasphemy.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard; see the diagram below just above the synthesis).*

Presentation. *II. Cursing and Profanity.*

On Holy Thursday night after Jesus had been taken prisoner by His enemies in the Garden of Olives, He was led by the soldiers to the palace of the High Priests, Caiphas and Annas. Two of the Apostles, after recovering from their first fright, retraced their steps, in order to follow the road taken by the Saviour. Peter, who was one of them, lingered at a distance, but the other disciple drew nearer the troop of armed men. It was John, the beloved disciple. As he was known at the palace of the High Priests, he managed to enter there with Jesus, not noticing that his companion

no longer followed him. Peter, fearing to appear inside the courtyard, hung back in the darkness outside. Noticing his absence John went out, spoke a word to the servant-maid, who tended the door, and so introduced Peter into the house.

Casting a curious glance at the stranger the portress asked sharply: "Are not you, too, one of this man's disciples?" "No, I am not," replied Peter, and quickly he hurried out of her way. To protect themselves from the cold night air, the guards and the men-servants had lighted a small fire of such thorny brushwood as grows in abundance about Jerusalem. Seated in this little circle Peter was warming his trembling hands, "awaiting the end," when for the second time he encountered the keen glance of the portress. "Certainly," she said, "you were with Jesus of Nazareth!" Then before all Peter denied Jesus, saying: "I do not know what you mean to say." But she persisted that she was right, telling the others: "Certainly, I know he was with Him!" "Woman," Peter replied, "I do not even know Him!" Then greatly troubled in mind Peter hurried away from the group of curious bystanders.

As he neared the door he met another maid-servant. She, too, said to the waiting men and the rest standing about: "This man was with Jesus of Nazareth!" And Peter denied it with an oath. The other maid-servant had persisted in following Peter up, and at this she spoke up, saying: "Surely, this is one of them!" And again Peter denied it. One of the bystanders then asked him: "What! Are you one of that set yonder?" "Man," replied Peter, "I am not one of them!" Driven back from the door by his questioners, Peter returned to his former standing-place beside the fire. Some of those nearby then said: "You, too, are one of His disciples!" Whereat Peter answered: "No, I am not!" His neighbors hearing him speak, said: "Certainly, you are one of His disciples, for your accent betrays you. You are a Galilean!" "I do not know this man, of whom you speak!" Peter replied.

And in his fear and anger Peter uttered a stream of curses and oaths. (Adapted from Abbe Fouard's "The Christ, the Son of God") *(Show the pupils a large picture of this scene).*

Explanation. 1. What shameful conduct did not Peter show in the court-yard of the High Priests! How deeply he fell into sin! Tell me: What did the maid-servant say to Peter?—What did Peter answer? Then he called God to witness the truth of his falsehoods. What sin did Peter commit, therefore?—But Peter was guilty of other sins. When the two maid-servants and the bystanders refused to believe him, what did Peter do?—Yes, he became angry. He began to wish evil to himself and to his neighbors; he began to damn himself and his neighbors, uttering at the same time God's name. Peter cursed. *Cursing means to wish evil to ourselves, or our neighbor, or to any of God's creatures, whereby the name of God is frequently dishonored. (Repeat together).*

2. In Hell the devils curse themselves, their companions and God. Cursing is, therefore, the language of Hell. And yet frequently, yes, too frequently, we hear men and women and even children wish evil to themselves, to their neighbors, or to the other creatures of God. "Oh! if only I were dead," they say; or "I will be damned;" or "if only you were dead"; or "to Hell with you;" or "God damn your soul," etc. Really one would almost think that these people had come out of Hell. If such people do not change their language they will surely some day be condemned to Hell with the damned and the evil spirits. For such wicked, hateful people are not fit for Heaven. God Himself has said so expressly in the Holy Scriptures: "Know you not that railers (those who curse and blaspheme) shall not possess the kingdom of God?" (I Cor. vi, 9). Cursing is a sin against the second Commandment of God. Our Catechism says: **The second Commandment forbids cursing.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard; see the diagram below just above the synthesis).*

All cursing is wicked and sinful; but not every curse has the same amount of wickedness. The greater the evil we wish to ourselves or to our neighbors, the greater is the sin we commit. If we wish a serious evil to ourselves or to our neighbors, and if we do it with full reflection and consent of the will, from our heart, we are guilty of a mortal sin. But if we wish only a slight evil, or if we have no real ill will towards those whom we curse, we are guilty only of a venial sin. But remember, that our Blessed Lord has said: "Every idle word that men shall speak, they shall render an account for it on the day of judgment" (Matt. xii, 36).

But what if a curse happens to escape from one's mouth before one is aware of it? Is that a mortal sin?—If such a curse comes from a bad habit, which a person has taken no pains to overcome, such a person is indeed guilty of sin in God's sight. Why? Because God wants us to practise good habits, or virtues, and not evil habits, or vices. Therefore, you must change your habit of speech while there is still time, lest you be condemned on the day of judgment.—Finally, remember that it is possible for a person to commit the sin of cursing, blasphemy and irreverence *by thought*, or in one's heart, without even expressing it in words. We may not sin even in thought or desire.

3. a) Now let us think of Peter again. The maid-servants and the rest in the court-yard of the High Priests continued to accuse Peter of being one of Christ's disciples. Peter became very angry. And when one of the bystanders asked: "What! are you one of that set yonder?" Peter retorted: "Man, I am not one of that set!" Again Peter said: "I do not know that man, of whom you are speaking!" Do you see how irreverently Peter spoke of Christ and His chosen disciples? Finally Peter misused God's name to commit sin by swearing in a false manner and by cursing. Therefore Peter was guilty of profane words, or of profanity. He spoke God's name without a reasonable cause, and in an irreverent manner. Many people imi-

tate Peter's example. For instance, a man happens to meet another on the street. At once he exclaims: "Christ, where did you come from?" Or the whistle blows at noon and a mother remembers that she has not yet finished preparing the noon meal. Immediately she exclaims: "My God! it is already twelve o'clock." Or people use God's name in jest, without reverence, or laugh at anything that concerns religion, or God's ministers, or the Sacraments, or the ceremonies of the Church, or turn them into ridicule, or make jokes out of the Holy Scripture, or the Lives of the Saints. Such people are guilty of profane words. Therefore, *by profane words, or profanity, is meant the pronouncing of the name of God, or of the Saints, or sacred things, at the least provocation, or in anger, or in jest, or in surprise, or any other careless and irreverent manner. (Repeat together).*

b) Do you not think that God was displeased at Peter for his having spoken profane words? If a person were to go through the streets calling out your name, or the name of your dear parents, in jest, or anger, or any other careless manner, how would you feel about it? Would you not become displeased? So too, God is displeased with all who misuse His name, or the names of His chosen friends, or the names of sacred things, in a careless and irreverent fashion. All that is a sin against the second Commandment. Our Catechism says: **The second Commandment forbids profane words.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).* —Such sins are not generally grievous, because they are not committed with deliberate intention of irreverence. But when people scoff at or deride religion, not out of thoughtlessness and levity, but with more or less contempt, they are guilty of blasphemy, and commit a mortal sin. Then again, profane words may be a grievous sin, if done in the presence of those who might be greatly shocked by what they heard, or led thereby to lose respect for religion.

(Dear children, I remember reading once of a certain old woman, suffering from the terrible disease of cancer of the tongue. In order to save her life it was necessary to cut out her tongue. Before the operation took place the doctor said to her: "Now speak once more. It is your last word. For hereafter you will no longer be able to speak!" The sick woman answered: "Well then, my last word shall be: Praised be Jesus Christ!" That was indeed a beautiful greeting, a true veneration for the Lord's name).

Write on the blackboard:

Second Commandment forbids:

a) blasphemy—contemptuous and abusive language against God, the Saints, sacred things;

b) cursing—wishing evil to ourselves, our neighbors, God's creatures;

c) profane words—uttering God's name, names of the Saints, or sacred things without a reasonable cause, in an irreverent way.

Synthesis. You see, therefore, that there are many ways, in which one can dishonor God's name. How did the Jews and soldiers dishonor God's name? What is blasphemy? How did Peter dishonor God's name? What is cursing? What other sins did Peter commit? What are profane words? What is forbidden by the second Commandment? *(Have the pupils read the entire answer from the Catechism. Assign the lesson for the next class).*

Application. 1. Our Bible History tells us of a certain king who blasphemed God's name. His name was Sennacherib, king of the Assyrians. This heathen king determined to force Ezechias, king of the Jews, to do battle with him. He had already won several Jewish cities at the point of the sword. Now he sent his general against Jerusalem, in order to get possession of it. The general pitched his camp a short distance from the Holy City, and commanded king Ezechias to surrender.

But Ezechias trusted in the Lord. At the command of the Assyrian king the general announced to the Jews: "Do not allow yourselves to be led by Ezechias, for he shall not be able to save you! Neither put yourselves to be comforted by Ezechias, who asks you to trust in the Lord, saying: The Lord will save us, and the city will not fall into the hands of the Assyrians. Did the gods of the other lands save their lands from the hands of the king of Assyria? Who is the God among the gods of these lands that will save this land from my hand? And the Lord is said to be able to preserve Jerusalem from my hand?"—When Ezechias had heard this, he grew sad. After praying to God, Ezechias sent to the Prophet, Isaias, who comforted the king and the people saying: "Thus saith the Lord: Be not afraid for the words, which thou hast heard, with which the servants of the king of the Assyrians have blasphemed Me. The Assyrian king will not come into the city, neither will he send arrows into it. No shield will appear before it, no one will cast a trench about it. By the way that he came, he shall return, and into the city he shall not come, saith the Lord."—And so it happened. An angel came into the camp of the Assyrians and destroyed 185,000 of them during the night. In the morning there were corpses everywhere. Then Sennacherib broke up camp and returned into his city, Nineveh. While he was adoring his idols, he was murdered by his own son in the temple.

You can understand, then, why God punished the crime of blasphemy so severely even in the Old Testament. Whoever of the children of Israel blasphemed God was stoned to death like a mad dog. The whole community, all the citizens of the town, had to throw stones at the blasphemer, in order to show their detestation of this wicked crime, and at the same time to be preserved from a similar sin. Thus God punishes often even in this life the sin of blasphemy in a very striking manner; at any rate, whoever dies with the crime upon his soul, will be cast into eternal Hell-fire with the

devils and damned souls, who make use of such language.

2. Cursing, too, is a sin against the second Commandment of God. Here are some examples of this sin. While on the way to school, Henry stumbles and hurts himself. At once he gets angry and exclaims: "God damn it!" While writing the ink well falls over and soils his copy book; immediately he flares up in anger and says under his breath: "Christ! Just look at this?" Now, when Henry goes to confession, what must he say?—"I have cursed once; and I profaned God's holy name twice." Remember what God Himself says about the misuse of His name: "He shall not go unpunished, that taketh the Lord's name in vain" (Deut. v, 11).

3. Just think of a child in Purgatory, that is obliged to do penance for its cursing and profane words. Suppose that child had the habit of committing such sins ten, twenty, fifty or even more times a day! Suppose that child had that evil habit for five, ten, twenty years. How many sins would not that child have committed during all those years! If it must suffer in Purgatory until it pays the last farthing, what severe penance must it not endure! *Examine your conscience now.* Resolve to avoid all irreverence of God's adorable name.

4. (Some people have cursed, blasphemed and profaned God's holy name for such a long time that they say: "Oh! I cannot break myself of this habit." That is a poor excuse. Once there was an old general, who for years had been addicted to this evil habit. He was taken ill and sent to the hospital under the care of a Sister of Charity. At the very first severe attack of pain he let out such a stream of curses and profanity and blasphemy, that the good sister nearly fell into a faint. She called him to order, and begged him to lay aside this wicked habit. But he replied, that he was absolutely unable to do that. The sister promised that

if he would give her his word of honor as a soldier to follow her instructions faithfully, he would soon be cured of this vice. He promised after a great deal of coaxing. The sister ordered him to give one dollar to the poor every time that he committed this sin. The general might protest as much as he would; he might insist that he would die a beggar in the poor house—all in vain, the sister ordered that he do as he had promised. Soon an attack of pain came over him, and he cursed. The sister collected a dollar. The general scratched his head, and said to himself: "Good heavens! I must be careful, otherwise I will surely become penniless." He cursed only once or twice more that day. The following day even less. Soon he went to Confession and was a changed man. A few dollars had cured him of a most detestable habit. Ought not a Christian to be ashamed to say, that he is unable to overcome this evil habit, even for the love of Christ? With a good will and the grace of God, which you can always obtain for the asking, you will soon be able to overcome this wicked habit entirely. Are you not going to promise to try?)

5. Let us now recite together devoutly the Litany of the Holy Name of Jesus in reparation of our irreverence and to make up for all the sins committed by others against God's Holy Name.

LESSON XVIII.

Sanctification of the Lord's Day.

Catechetical Unit:

1) What is the third Commandment? L. XXXII, Q. 352.

2) Are the Sabbath day and the Sunday the same? L. XXXII, Q. 356.

3) Why does the Church command us to keep the Sunday instead of the Sabbath? L. XXXII, Q. 357.

4) What are we commanded by the third Commendment? L. XXXII, Q. 354.

5) How are we to worship God on Sundays and holy-days of obligation? L. XXXII, Q. 355.

6) What is forbidden by the third Commandment? L. XXXII, Q. 358.

7) What are servile works? L. XXXII, 359.

8) Are servile works on Sundays ever lawful? L. XXXII, Q. 360.

Preparation. Dear children, one of the most common sins that men commit is the abuse of the holy name of God. Let us review what we learned of that in the last class. *(Question the pupils briefly on the foregoing lesson).*—God created the world in six days. "But he rested on the seventh day from all His work, which He had done. And He blessed the seventh day and sanctified it." (Gen. ii, 2s). That was henceforth to be "the Lord's day." But very soon after our first parents had fallen into sin, men again began to desecrate the Lord's day. Then God announced His Commandment for the second time: "Remember that thou keep holy the Sabbeth-day!" Let us repeat this Commandment together: **The third Commandment is: Remember that thou keep holy the Sabbath-day.** *(Use the blackboard; see the diagram below just above the synthesis).*—The Jews still keep the Saturday as the Sabbath. But with us Christians it is different. We keep the Sunday, the first day of the week, instead of the Saturday. Our Catechism says: **The Sabbath and the Sunday are not the same. The Sabbath is the seventh day of the week, and is the day which was kept holy in the Old Law; the Sunday is the first day of the week; and is the day which is kept holy in the New Law.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*—But why do we Christians celebrate the Sunday instead of the Saturday?—Christ arose gloriously from the tomb on a Sunday; and on a Sunday He sent the Holy Ghost upon us. Therefore even the Apostles themselves sanc-

tified the Sunday instead of the Saturday. That Commandment: "Remember that thou keep holy the Sabbath-day!" means, therefore, for us Christians: "Remember that thou keep holy the Sunday!" For us Christians the Sunday is a threefold holy day: as the Christian Sabbath, as a little Easter and as a little Pentecost. **The Church commands us to keep the Sunday holy instead of the Sabbath, because on Sunday Christ arose from the dead, and on Sunday He sent the Holy Ghost upon the Apostles.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

Aim. *How ought the Christian to sanctify the* Sunday? I shall first tell you how the early Christians sanctified the Sunday.—(What is meant by a "subdeacon"? "a deacon"? "Kyrie eleison"? "Gloria in excelsis Deo"?)

Presentation. Close to Rome there is a large underground city, the Catacombs. There the early Christians used to bury their dead. There, too, they sought protection from their enemies. There they secretly held the Divine services. Thither let us now go in spirit.

It is still dark night. Suddenly we see clothed forms approach from all sides. They are carrying little lamps in their hands. Silently and with serious mien they move along, men, women and children. They are Christians, who are on their way to Divine worship. Through a secret opening we enter into the Catacombs. The underground passage-ways twist and turn in endless fashion. To the right and the left we see hundreds of tombs in the rock. We find ourselves, therefore, among the dead. We proceed a little farther and come to a small chapel. Numerous lamps hang suspended from the ceiling and light up the little chapel. The walls are covered with sacred paintings. In the twilight we discern the tomb of a martyr. A precious marble slab covers the tomb—that is the altar. Next to it there stands a table for the offerings of the faithful. To the right of the altar is the stone throne for

the Bishop. Around the sides are stone benches for the priests. Gradually the little chapel is filled.

Now the services begin. Kneeling the people pray with the Bishop the "Kyrie eleison—Lord have mercy on us!" Then all arise. The Bishop intones the "Gloria: Glory be to God on high!" And all, great and small, recite the glorious hymn together. Then follows the prayer of the Bishop for the faithful. A subdeacon reads the Epistle, a deacon solemnly chants the Gospel. Then the Bishop sits upon his throne, and preaches a sermon. He begins with the words of St. Paul: "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the charity of God, and the communication of the Holy Ghost be with you all. Amen" (II Cor. xiii, 13). Filled with reverence the little sheep listen to the words of their shepherd. All draw new courage and strength and confidence from that sermon.

The sermon is finished. The entire congregation prays the "Credo: I believe in God, the Father," etc. Then the Sacrifice, in the strict sense, begins. The Christians bring their offerings to the altar. The deacons select from the offerings as much bread and wine as is necessary for the Holy Sacrifice and the Communion—it is the Offertory. Soon the solemn moment arrives—the Consecration. Deep silence. All are upon their knees and are adoring the Most Blessed Sacrament: "Hail, Thou true Body of Jesus Christ!" "Hail, Thou Precious Blood of Jesus Christ!" "In deepest reverence we adore Thee!" The "Pater noster: Our Father"—is then recited by all the people.

Now there follows an impressive moment. The deacon calls out: "Kiss one another with the holy kiss!" Immediately all give the kiss of peace to one another, the priests and the ministers of the altar impart it to the Bishop, the men give it to the men, and the women to the women. Again the deacon exclaims: "The Holy of Holies!" At these words all approach the altar in turn, kneel down and receive Holy Communion. The

Bishop recites at the same time these words: "The Body of Christ!" Now they are happy; for they have Jesus in their hearts. From every eye there shines forth the message: "My Jesus, my God and my All!" With jubilant hearts all give thanks once more for the priceless gift of God. And the Bishop again blesses his sheep, saying: "Pax vobis—Peace be with you!" The Divine services are over.

The pious worshipers leave the sanctuary. Some of them visit the graves of dear ones before going home, while others pray at the tombs of the holy Martyrs; finally others assist at the Christian Doctrine class for those that are soon to be baptized. Many go to the love feast, where the poor are fed by the wealthy. But hold! what is that? Several men are carrying beneath their cloaks a little plate or a chalice. They are the deacons, who are carrying the Blessed Sacrament to the sick and those in the prisons. These poor Christians are not to go away empty-handed; for they have special need of the heavenly food. In silence and quietly praying the Christians then turn their steps homeward. But the entire day belongs to the dear Lord, for it is "the day of the Lord."

Explanation. 1. That must have been edifying and impressive, such a Sunday in the Catacombs! The Christians laid aside all the cares and distractions of the weekdays and gave themselves entirely over to the service and the worship of the Lord God. They spent the whole day in the practise of those religious acts, which tend to the worship of God and to the eternal interests of their souls. They kept holy, sanctified, the Lord's day. That is what the third Commandment of God commands of us, too. And we must do that, not only on Sundays, but also on all those special days, which are set aside by the Church for the glory of God, or the honor of the Saints, or in memory of some mystery of our holy Faith. These special days, outside of the Sundays, are six in number and are called

"holydays of obligation." They must be kept just like the Sundays. **By the third Commandment we are commanded to keep holy the Lord's day and the holydays of obligation, on which we are to give our time to the service and worship of God.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

2. a) As regards the most important point we have still the very same celebration of the Sunday as did the early Christians. What is it that makes the Sunday to be Sunday?—The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass is the kernel and the marrow of the Sunday celebration. The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass is the unbloody Sacrifice of the Cross; therefore it is the greatest thing for God and the best thing for us. In it Jesus Himself celebrates Divine worship with us and for us. Christ is the Divine Sacrificial Lamb upon the altar and praises God and thanks God and satisfies God for sin and prays to God for us. Do you see? That is the reason why the early Christians thought so much of the Mass. To attend Holy Mass was often forbidden under pain of death; however, they came in spite of the danger of death. They were Christian heroes. And how devout were they not withal! One would almost imagine, that they were all angels!—That is our duty, too: **We are to worship God on Sundays and holydays of obligation by hearing Mass.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

b) When the early Christians were gathered together in the seclusion of the Catacombs on the Lord's day, they raised their minds and hearts to God in devout prayer. How they adored His majesty, His greatness and might! How devoutly they praised His holy name! What fervent thanks did they not send up to the throne of the Giver of all good gifts! How earnestly they entreated Him to continue to shower upon them and their dear ones blessings of body and soul! How sincerely they begged His forgiveness for their sins and shortcomings in His service! They kept

the Lord's day holy by making it a day of prayer. We are bound to follow their example. **We are to worship God on Sundays and holydays of obligation by prayer.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

c) The sermon, too, is part of the Divine services. That was the case with the early Christians. The deacon sang the Gospel to the people in a solemn manner; then the Bishop explained the meaning of the Gospel. So it is with us today. Do you now see what the Church wants of us?—The Church demands, of course, only the Mass; but she also wants her children *to listen to the sermon.* But many people have a dread of the sermon. Do you know why?—Jesus Himself once said: "He that is of God heareth the words of God. Therefore you hear them not, because you are not of God" (John viii, 47).

d) One thing especially must have struck you in the celebration of the Sunday by the early Christians. —All went to Holy Communion. Yes, that was the pious custom. Then no one stayed away for every trifling reason. No one wanted to be deprived of such a precious heavenly gift. The Christians believed, that a Sunday without Holy Communion was no real Sunday at all. Therefore they lived in such a holy manner, too. There are still many pious people, who communicate every Sunday. The Church loves to see that and the Holy Father desires that most ardently. *We ought to keep the Sunday and holydays of obligation holy by a worthy reception of the Sacraments.* Very many people have the idea, that it is enough to receive the Sacraments once a year. Yes, for lukewarm and careless Catholics it is enough. But St. Paul said: "He who soweth sparingly, shall also reap sparingly" (II Cor. ix, 6). Do you understand what that means?—

e) The early Christians did more than that; for them the entire Sunday was a holy day. The Sunday is indeed the workday for the soul and for Heaven. What works of charity did they, therefore, perform?

—They visited the graves of their dear departed ones; they prayed at the graves of the holy Martyrs. Many also attended the Christian Doctrine class. The more well-to-do Christians fed the poorer members of the Church. Others visited the sick. At home they sang pious hymns and entertained themselves in a truly Christian manner. That is a worthy Sunday celebration. Surely God, too, must be pleased with that.—Just like the early Christians **we, too, are to worship God on Sundays and holydays of obligation by other good works.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

3. The Sundays and holydays of obligation are the workdays for the soul. That we have just seen. But they are also *days of rest for the body.* On these days, therefore, let all work cease! God Himself has said that expressly: "Six days thou shalt labour, and shalt do all thy works. But on the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord, thy God; thou shalt do no work on it, thou nor thy son, nor thy daughter, nor thy manservant, nor thy maid-servant, nor thy beast, nor the stranger that is within thy gates" (Gen. xx, 9s). What works are, then, forbidden on those days?—The early Christians would not perform any hard work on Sundays and holydays of obligation, such works as plowing, planting, mowing, building, washing, splitting wood, etc. All these works require labor of the body rather than of the mind. They are generally performed by servants and are called *"servile works."* Our Catechism says: **Servile works are those which require labor rather of the body than of the mind.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*—But the early Christians did not hesitate to study, to write, to read, to draw, to paint pictures, to play music, etc., for these works require labor rather of the mind than of the body. They are not servile works; hence they may be performed on Sundays without sin.

4. a) That is God's holy will. But we must not exaggerate in this regard, as did the Jews of old. They

had a real dread of the Sabbath. They would not start a fire, or cook, or walk more than a thousand paces on the Sabbath. That is not what the third Commandment of God means. The early Christians were very conscientious. Nevertheless, they prepared their meals on the Sabbath. It was certainly necessary to work in preparing the love feasts, which were so common in the early Christian times. Christian women, too, had to put their dwellings in order. Many Christians were farmers; therefore, they had to feed the animals too. They did these things without scruple or anxiety. And rightly, too. We may perform all necessary housework, and in fact, all necessary servile work. Our Catechism says: **The third Commandment forbids all unnecessary servile work.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

b) Unnecessary servile work desecrates the Lord's day. But that is by no means the worst sin against the third Commandment. A proverb says: "The Sunday is the devil's best workday!" Do you understand the meaning of this old saying?—On a Sunday the devil does his best business; then it is that he catches most immortal souls. I wonder do you know why?—On no day are so many sins committed as on a Sunday. One has only to take a peep into the places of amusement on the Lord's day: how men and women and even children sing and carouse, and drink, and play for money, and dance! Sometimes one would almost imagine that the evil spirits of Hell had come together. Is that keeping the Lord's day holy?—Surely such conduct hinders the due observance of the Lord's day. Therefore the third Commandment also forbids **whatever else may hinder the due observance of the Lord's day.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*—Whoever acts like that is a desecrator of the Sunday. The desecrator of the Sunday says: "Oh! I want to have a little enjoyment too." You ought to have it; but God, too, wants to have His day. Quiet entertainment, a little excursion, that is proper in God's sight. But enjoy

yourselves in a Christian manner. But do not profane the Lord's day by intemperance, extravagant games, sports, amusements, which make the Lord's day a day of revelry and public scandal. Do not imitate the wicked conduct of worldlings and infidels!

5. a) Now just a few words more in regard to servile works! The third Commandment forbids all unnecessary servile works. But sometimes there are urgent and pressing works, that have to be done on a Sunday or holyday of obligation. The baker must have fresh bread. A mother says: "I must mend the clothing of my children." Here the old proverb holds good: "Necessity knows no law!" Remember, therefore, that **servile works are lawful on a Sunday when necessity requires them.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

b) Already the early Christians acted in that way. For the Divine services much work was required; to prepare the graves in the Catacombs; that had to be done on a Sunday too. The altars had to be trimmed, etc. God's honor made such servile works necessary. **Servile works are lawful on a Sunday, when the honor of God requires it.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*—When the early Christians were in doubt as to whether they were allowed to do any particular work, they went to the Bishop, or to the priest, and asked for advice. That is the proper way.

c) The pious Christians in the early days also loved to perform that beautiful work of Christian charity—nursing the sick. They delighted in doing any other work that was for their neighbor's good. We may imitate their example. Therefore **servile works are lawful on Sunday when the good of our neighbor requires them.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).* Christ Himself said: "The Sabbath is made for man, and not man for the Sabbath" (Mark ii, 27). But to work without a good reason is a sin; and to allow others to work without necessity, is a doubt sin.

Write on the blackboard:

1. "Remember that thou keep holy the Sabbath-day!"
2. Sabbath (seventh day) in the Old Testament—Sunday (first day) in the New Testament.
3. Sunday—Christ's Resurrection and Descent of Holy Ghost.
4. Third Commandment *commands:* us to worship God.
5. How do we keep Lord's day?
   a) hear Mass; b) pray; c) perform other good works.
6. Third Commandment *forbids* servile works (works performed by the body rather than the mind).
7. Servile works allowed:
   a) when required for God's honor; b) our neighbor's good; c) necessity demands.

Synthesis. Let us repeat the chief points concerning the proper celebration of the Lord's day. What is the third Commandment of God? Are the Sabbath and the Sunday the same? Why do we keep the Sunday instead of the Sabbath? What does the third Commandment command of us on Sundays and holydays of obligation? How do we worship God on these days? What is forbidden by the third Commandment? What are servile works? What else desecrates the Sunday? May we ever perform servile works on Sunday? *(Have the pupils read the answers from the Catechism. Assign the lesson for the next class).*

Application. 1. We have admired the courage and the willing spirit of sacrifice of the early Christians. The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass was dearer to them than their own life. Have our Christians still a like holy zeal? Alas! for many the Holy Sacrifice has no value any more. For every little excuse they absent themselves, or say at once: "I cannot live from going to church!" What a disgrace and a sin! Whoever thinks and talks like that says to Christ, as it were: "I do

not need Thy grace!" How impudent and ungrateful! Indeed, Jesus will say some time to such people: "Neither do I need you. I will have nothing to do with you. Depart from Me!" What will the poor sinner say then?—

2. *How do you keep the Sunday and the holydays of obligation?* Do you like to go to the Holy Sacrifice? How is your conduct during Holy Mass? If you talk and laugh and misbehave in Mass on these holydays, the Mass is not a blessing for you, but rather a source of punishment. By talking and misbehaving in Mass you rob: 1. God of the honor due Him; 2. the Angels of their joy; 3. yourselves of blessings; 4. the Poor Souls of help; 5. your fellow Christians of their devotion; 6. there will follow upon such conduct—a long and painful Purgatory, unless you earnestly do penance and amend your life.

3. Have you, perhaps, also desecrated the Sunday or the holydays of obligation by boisterous shouting and games? Stop such unbecoming behaviour! That is a bad beginning, and it may easily take a bad ending. Sometimes priests have asked the criminals in prison: "Why are you here?" Most of them were desecrators of the Lord's day. If we could at this moment look into Hell, and ask the damned: "Why are you here?"—very many would also have to answer: "I was a desecrator of the Sunday; that was my misfortune. If only I had kept the Sunday holy, I should now be in Heaven!" Yes, not without good reason did God threaten: "I said I would pour out My indignation upon them—for they grievously violated My Sabbaths" (Ezechiel xx, 13). Therefore, remember well: Keep holy the Sunday! A Sunday without Holy Mass is followed by a week without blessings. If the devil wants to get possession of anyone, he tries to keep such a one from listening attentively to the sermon. The curse of God rests upon servile works performed unlawfully on the Lord's day. As your Sunday, so too, will be the day of your death!

LESSON XIX.

Duties of Children Towards Their Parents.

Catechetical Unit:

1) What is the fourth Commandment? L. XXXIII, Q. 361.

2) What are we commanded by the fourth Commandment? L. XXXIII, Q. 362.

3) What is forbidden by the fourth Commandment? L. XXXIII, Q. 365 (first part).

4) Have parents any duties towards those who are under their charge? L. XXXIII, Q. 364 (first part).

Preparation. Dear children, Almighty God wrote His Commandments on two tables of stone. What Commandments are on the first table?—The first three Commandments tell us how we must love *God.* In the last class we studied the third Commandment. Let us first review this teaching. *(Question the pupils briefly on the foregoing lesson).*—Today we begin the study of the other seven Commandments of God. They tell us how we ought to love *our neighbor.* Who is our neighbor?—Those who are nearest to us; our closest neighbors are our dear parents. Therefore God wrote on the very top of the second table of stone: *"Honor thy father and thy mother!"* This Commandment belongs in a special manner to children. To this Commandment God also added a special blessing for all, who faithfully observe that law: *"that it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long upon the earth."* On the loyal observance of this Commandment, therefore, depends the lifelong happiness of children. Let us recite the fourth Commandment together: **The fourth Commandment is: Honor thy father and thy mother.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard; see the diagram below just above the synthesis).*—From your Bible History you know of good children and of bad children.

Aim. Today Joseph of Egypt shall be our model. From him we shall learn: *how good children ought to act towards their parents.*

Presentation. Father Jacob had twelve sons. Of these the dearest of all to him was Joseph; for Joseph had a good heart, was obedient and gave his father only joy and happiness. Joseph was sixteen years old and together with his brothers tended the sheep of his father.

Once these brothers committed a very wicked deed. Joseph ran away frightened and saddened to his home and told his father about it. That made his brothers angry. But the father loved Joseph on account of his innocence more than he loved the older sons, and he presented him with a coat of many colors. Thereafter his brothers looked *with envy* upon Joseph and refused to speak any kind words to him any more. Gradually their envy became so great, that they said: "Let us kill him!" However, then pity again moved their hearts, and they sold Joseph to certain merchants that happened along. The brothers dipped Joseph's coat into some blood, and sent the coat to their father with the message: "We have found this. See whether it be thy son's coat, or not." The father recognized the coat, saying: "It is my son's coat, an evil wild beast hath eaten him, a beast hath devoured Joseph!" In sorrow he tore his garments, mourning and weeping a long time for his lost son.

But what happened? Joseph was led away as a slave into Egypt, and came into the house of Putiphar. There the poor boy had to suffer a great deal. The wicked wife of Putiphar watched for a chance to destroy his innocence. But Joseph refused to listen to her wicked words, saying: "How can I do this wicked thing and sin against my God?" Thereupon Joseph was thrown into prison. But God does not abandon His own. Soon Joseph was released from prison and was even raised to the royal throne.

Meanwhile a great famine raged in the land of Chanaan. Joseph's brothers came, in order to buy corn. They did not recognize him; but he knew them at once. That was a bitter struggle for Joseph. Finally he made himself known to them, saying: "I am Joseph! Is my father alive yet?" Then he gave them the order: "Hasten home to father and tell him that he should come quickly to me! He is to live in my land and near me with all his children." With happy hearts the brothers returned home, and told their father: "Thy son Joseph is alive!" And soon father Jacob came. Joseph could scarcely wait for that day, so great was the joy of his heart. He went to meet his father with the royal chariot. As soon as he saw his father again, he fell upon his neck and wept. But the old father said: "Now shall I die with joy, because I have seen thy face, and leave thee alive!"

Thereupon Joseph led his old father to Pharao. Jacob saluted the King and blessed him. But the King rejoiced with him. Jacob lived seventeen years longer, and finally he died. Joseph threw himself upon the face of his dear father and wept. He buried the corpse in the land of Chanaan, as Jacob had desired. Joseph lived to be 110 years old and saw his grandchildren and great grandchildren.

Explanation. 1. a) That must have been an impressive moment, when old father Jacob saw his Joseph again! Joseph was now a great and mighty lord, but his father was merely a simple shepherd. In Egypt shepherds were looked down upon by the people. But Joseph was not ashamed at all of his father. In the sight of all the people he embraced his good father and kissed him and wept for joy. Then his father had to ride in the royal chariot into the city, and even go with him into the royal palace. That is how Joseph honored his father.—**We are commanded by the fourth Commandment to honor our parents.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*—It is written in the Sacred Scriptures: "Honor thy father" (Ecclesiasticus vii,

29): "Honor thy mother all the days of thy life" (Tobias iv, 3).

Now let us look at Joseph's brothers. Did they, too, honor their father?—When father Jacob heard such wicked things about his sons, he certainly scolded them severely, saying: "What must I hear about you? Why do you do *evil things* under the eyes of God? How can you bring such disgrace upon me!" But do you think that the words of their father touched their hearts? They, of course, did as other wicked children do, and talked back to their father in a saucy and impudent manner, saying: "We are old enough to know what we must do!" And afterwards they laughed at their father, and ridiculed him, saying: "Let him keep his good teachings to himself!" Is that reverence? No, that is contempt, and a sin against the fourth Commandment. **The fourth Commandment forbids all contempt towards our parents.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

b) Let us look again at Joseph. He clung to his father with childlike love. To him his father was his dearest possession on earth. If only he could be with his father, he felt happy at heart. Never did he cause him worry or trouble. He delighted in helping his good father at his work. Every day he raised his hands and heart to Heaven, to draw down God's blessing upon his father. And when he saw his good father again, he embraced him lovingly and kissed him. Then his good father had to stay with him. Now there was not any need any longer; his old father could end his days without cares and worry. Joseph was happy, because his father was happy. Do you see? That is genuine child's love. **We are commanded by the fourth Commandment to love our parents.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

But with Joseph's brethren matters were entirely different. They often made their father angry because of their wicked behaviour. They sold Joseph into slav-

ery. That nearly broke their father's heart; he was grieved unto death. God alone knows how many bitter tears he must have wept over it. Therefore I am not at all surprised, that he once complained: "You will bring my gray hairs down into the grave!" Is that the love of a child, to give trouble to one's parents by one's bad behaviour, or to grieve them and put them into a passion?—But there are children, who do even worse than that. If their parents become poor and destitute, they do not come to their assistance; yes, they do not even give them a little food but let them suffer hunger. Or when their parents get old and helpless, they even curse their parents, and say: "Oh! If only our parents were dead. One has nothing but trouble and care with them!" How can a child be so unkind and heartless! You see, therefore, that *children sin against the fourth Commandment, when by their bad behaviour, they give them trouble, and grieve them, and put them into a passion, or when they do not assist them in their need or old age. (Repeat together).*

c) One knows a tree by its fruits, a good child by its obedience. Joseph was an obedient child. Whatever he could guess that his father wanted, that he did not hesitate to do at once, and he did it with the greatest joy. Therefore Joseph was also the joy of his father. It was not necessary for his father to scold a long time, or to get into a passion; one word, a gesture—and it was done. With Joseph there was no such thing as long consideration or many questions or much complaint; no; no sooner said than done! That is the proper obedience. **We are commanded by the fourth Commandment to obey our parents.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).* St. Paul says: "Children, obey your parents in the Lord (that is, for God's sake), for this is just" (Eph. iv, 1).

You can easily imagine how Joseph's brothers acted towards their father. How do disobedient children conduct themselves?—They have a head of their own; they are stubborn. If their parents ask them to do

something, they always have some excuse or other, or they make long faces, or force their parents to ask them twice or three times. Sometimes they even say: "I do not want to do that; you can do it yourself!" All that is sinful. **The fourth Commandment forbids all stubbornness and disobedience towards our parents.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

3. But there are also unchristian parents. I have already heard of a father, who commanded his child to steal something; and of a mother, who told her child to tell a lie to the teacher in school. Is that allowed? —What ought a child to do in that case?—The child should say to its parents: "No, that is wrong. I may not do that!" If a father says to his child: "Today you do not have to go to church." And yet, it is Sunday and the child can go without any trouble. What should the child answer? "Father, let me go to Mass! I will gladly obey you in all things, but do not make me miss Holy Mass; for that would be a sin." Do you not think that God Almighty will reward such a child a thousand times for such courage? Our Catechism says: **We are commanded by the fourth Commandment to obey our parents in all that is not sin.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

4. (Joseph was a good son. But why did he cling to his father with all his heart?—Children are a great burden to their parents. What trouble and care does not a little child cause its parents! How much care and worry do not the parents suffer, when their dear child gets sick! The mother must watch over that sick child for whole nights without sleep; but the mother does that gladly for love of her dear child. How hard the father must work, in order that he might earn the daily bread for his little ones! Sometimes the parents would like to get something for themselves; but they say: "No, we must save for our children!" What would become of a poor, helpless child, if the father or mother did not trouble themselves about it? Just think of the poor heathen children! Yes, after God all chil-

dren owe most to their dear parents. Remember, therefore, that *after God our parents are our greatest benefactors.* Joseph knew all that too; consequently he was grateful to his father for all that. Yes, he was doubly grateful to his father, because Joseph was no longer able to thank his mother (Rachel), for she was already dead).

5. But parents are to their children much more than benefactors. Every child is a child of the heavenly Father. God loves every child as the apple of His eye. He has entrusted children to their parents, and has commanded the parents: "Take care of My child and care for it and make it a child of God! You must command your children in My name!" And in order that parents might do all that willingly, God put into the hearts of parents some of His love. Perhaps you have never yet thought of that very earnestly. Yes, our parents have a high and holy duty towards their children: *they are God's representatives.* Therefore our Catechism says: **It is the duty of parents to take good care of all under their charge and give them proper direction and example.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).* Joseph never forgot that. That is the reason why his heart was filled with reverence and love and obedience towards his good father.

6. (For a long time Joseph's brothers had no luck and blessing any more. They fell into dire need. As beggars they came into Egypt. And when Joseph revealed himself to them, saying: "I am Joseph!"—they fell to the ground as though struck by lightning. They would have liked most of all to hide themselves somewhere in the ground, so ashamed were they. That was God's just punishment. Whoever does not esteem father and mother, shows disrespect to the heavenly Father Himself.—The brothers did, indeed, enter into themselves. That was their good fortune; otherwise they would also have been lost forever. For God has threatened, saying: "Cursed be he that honoreth not father and mother" (Deut. xxvii, 16). There you see

what wicked children have to expect.—*Children who do not fulfil their duties towards their parents have to expect the curse of God in this life, and eternal damnation in the life to come. (Repeat together).*

7. (For good children, however, matters are entirely different. Just look at Joseph! His brethren wanted to kill him, but God protected him. The wicked wife of Putiphar desired to rob him of his innocence, but God protected him. Joseph was cast into prison, but God freed him, and even raised him to the royal throne. Do you see how God's protection and blessing rest upon good children? Joseph lived to be 110 years of age and saw his children and children's children. Yes, God did not promise in vain: "that it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long upon the earth!" Joseph's name still lives upon the earth; but his soul lives with God in Heaven.—But do not many good children die young? Yes, but instead of a long life in this world God gives them Heaven. It is, then, true, that *children, who faithfully observe the fourth Commandment, may be sure of God's protection and blessing in this life, and of eternal happiness in the other life. (Repeat together).*

Write on the blackboard:

1. "Honor thy father and thy mother!"

2. Duties of children: to honor, love, obey their parents.

3. Sins of children: to show contempt, stubbornness and disobedience to their parents.

4. Parents must take care of their children—direct them to Heaven.

Synthesis. Joseph is the model for a good child. Are you his image and likeness? What we have learned today I would like to write with golden letters in your hearts.—What is the fourth Commandment? What does this Commandment command? Why ought chil-

dren to love, obey and honor their parents? How do children break this Commandment? What are the punishments God threatens against bad children? What are the rewards? Have parents any duties towards their children? *(Have the pupils read the answers from the Catechism. Assign the lesson for the next class).*

Application. 1. Joseph is in Heaven a long time already and has received his reward. From Heaven he calls out to you all: "Honor father and mother!" But I must examine your conscience for you a little more.

Have you reverence towards your parents? Or are you perhaps rude and stubborn, especially towards your mother? Are you ever unkind and sullen to father and mother? Have you ever spoken in a rough and contemptuous manner to them? Do you know what God says? "The eye that mocketh at his father and despiseth the labor of his mother in bearing him, let the ravens of the brooks pick it out, and the young eagles eat it" (Proverbs x, 13).

Have you love for your parents? If so, you will give nothing but joy to your parents and gladly help them with their work. Just think of the Divine Boy Jesus! Or have you not perhaps caused your parents bitter worry by your bad behaviour? Have you perhaps wrung tears from the eyes of your mother? Woe to you, if your mother must say: "If only you had died in the cradle!" or if she has to complain as did old father Jacob: "You will bring me down into the grave!" Yes, one could write on many a grave-stone: "Here lies a mother, who was killed by her own children." I would not want to be *that* child. I would be afraid and terrified at the punishment of God.

How about obedience? When your mother has told you to do something, have you not said to her: "Why must I do everything? Let brother, sister, do it!" Or have you perhaps said: "I won't do it!" and then run

away from your mother? Just wait! God will catch you in the end! Be on your guard and do not do that anymore!

2. *Bad children have no blessing.* You have seen that from the example of Joseph's brothers. In the Bible History we have many other examples of warning. Just think of the wicked Cham, of Heli's bad sons, of the naughty Absolom, son of King David!—*Good children have God's blessing.* Tobias was a good son. His father spoke very affectionate words of counsel to him. In reply young Tobias said so beautifully: "Father! all that you have told me, I will do gladly." Do you take the words of counsel of your parents to heart in good part like that?—St. Hedwig had a good son. His name was Louis the Pious. When he died, his mother raised her eyes and hands to Heaven and prayed: "O God! I thank Thee for having given to me such a good son. He always loved me and never caused me any grief. He was my dearest possession on earth!" If one of you had to die now, could your father and mother pray in that fashion? If not, then things must become different at once. When you go to confession the next time, first beg your parents for pardon and forgiveness from all your heart. Right now let us beg God's pardon: "O my God! pardon me for all that I have done against my parents. O my God! have mercy on my dear parents and keep them for me a long time. Bless all the cares and pains they took for me, and reward them richly in this life and in the life to come. I promise always to honor my father and mother, as Thou hast commanded me. I promise to obey their words of counsel and so to conduct myself, that they will be pleased with me. I will accept whatever good they tell me as though it came from Thy own lips. Help me, O God! to keep what I have just promised Thee, through Jesus Christ, Thy Son, Who also was obedient to His parents upon earth, and has given to us all the most beautiful example. Amen."

LESSON XX.

Duties of Inferiors to Their Superiors.

Catechetical Unit:

1) Are we bound to honor and obey others than our parents? L. XXXIII, Q. 363.

2) Have superiors any duties towards those who are under their charge? L. XXXIII, Q. 364 (second part).

3) What is forbidden by the fourth Commandment? L. XXXIII, Q. 365 (second part).

Preparation. Dear children, a child that honors its parents will receive God's richest blessings. Let us first review the lesson about the duties of children towards their parents. *(Question the pupils briefly on the preceding lesson).*—Parents have their power or authority over their children from God Himself; children have their duties towards their parents from God likewise. In the fourth Commandment God places other sacred duties on our consciences, namely duties towards our superiors.

Aim. We shall learn about that today: *how a true Christian ought to conduct himself towards his lawful superiors.*—Just listen to how conscientious the early Christians were!

Presentation. In the Lives of the Saints there is related the following story: In the Roman army there was once a legion of soldiers (over 6000 men), which consisted entirely of Christians. Now it happened that the pagan Roman Emperor wanted to go to war against his enemies. First, however, he offered a great sacrifice, in order to gain the good will of the gods. A strict order was issued: "All Christian soldiers are to appear for the sacrifice!" Thereupon the Christian captain Mauritius spoke out boldly and fearlessly:

"Emperor! We are Christians and wish to remain Christians. Send us forth against the enemy and at once we will obey and show that we are loyal and brave soldiers; but we will not sacrifice to the gods!"

The Emperor flared up in wild anger and gave the command: "Let every tenth man be selected from the ranks and let him be put to death by the sword before the eyes of his comrades!" Thus did he wish to bend and to break the stubbornness of the others. However, he was mistaken. These faithful Christians did not waver. The others praised the good fortune of their murdered brethren and declared: "We detest the gods. We prefer to endure anything rather than act against Christ's Commandments." For the second time the Emperor called out the order: "Every tenth man shall die!" Corpses were piled upon corpses. Mauritius and two other officers hastened from company to company. from man to man, and encouraged their comrades, saying: "Brothers, remain firm in the Faith! Behold our brothers have already received the crown of victory. They are transfigured before the throne of God. Shall we be less courageous than they? We have vowed to defend the realm of the Emperor with our lives, and shall we hesitate to sacrifice our lives for the kingdom of Christ?"

All the soldiers were firmly resolved to die for the Faith and for Christ. They sent this answer to the Emperor: "Emperor! We are thy soldiers, but we are also God's servants. We have dedicated our lives to thy service, but our hearts we have pledged to God. For a long time already have we loyally served both Masters and will continue to do it, as long as we are able. But if we must become disobedient to one of these Masters, then know thou: We must obey God more than man! Command, Emperor, that we fight against the enemy and that we die, and we will gladly obey; but let us keep our Faith. We have sworn fidelity to Christ; we will keep our oath loyally. We saw the blood of our brothers flow and we remained undis-

turbed; our loyalty did not waver. We still have our weapons in our hands; but we will not turn them against thee. We remain faithful to thee; but we will also reman loyal to our God and are prepared to die!"

These glorious words only inflamed the anger of the Emperor the more. He gave the command to surround the entire legion and to strike down these brave soldiers to the last man. And so it was done. The Christian soldiers laid their weapons down and willingly offered their heads for the deadly stroke. All died as martyrs for the holy Faith, loyal to their God and to their Emperor unto death.

Explanation. 1. a) You wonder at these heroes of the Christian Faith, do you not? Yes, such heroic courage the world had never seen before.—The soldiers were Christians, the Emperor was a heathen. Now right here I have a difficulty: Can a heathen or a pagan command a Christian?—Even though the Emperor was a heathen, he was, nevertheless, Master or Superior, and the soldiers were his subjects. From whom had the Emperor his power or authority?—When Jesus stood before Pilate, He said expressly: "Thou shouldst not have any power against Me, unless it were given thee from above" (John xix, 11). All power or authority comes from God. Those Christian soldiers knew that too. Emperors, kings, princes, presidents, governors, mayors and their officials, command and rule in temporal matters. Therefore we call them *temporal rulers*. God has entrusted them with the care of the welfare of their subjects. They must keep peace and order in the land; they must see to it that every man gets his rights. That is their sacred duty. There must be such higher power or authority, otherwise there would be disorder everywhere. Where there is no order, there is no peace, there struggle and warfare reign; the strong will oppress the weak and men will become like wild beasts.—*The power or authority of temporal rulers is from God Himself for the temporal welfare of their subjects. (Repeat tobether).*

b) But there is also a spiritual power or authority. There are likewise *spiritual rulers.* Thus it was already among the early Christians. The Pope is the Supreme Ruler of the entire Church; the Bishop is the Head of the diocese, the Pastor of his parish. The spiritual rulers have power or authority in spiritual matters; they care for the welfare of the soul. Therefore their power or authority is higher and holier than the temporal power or authority. For the soul is worth more than the body. But whence comes the spiritual power or authority?—It comes from Christ; He first gave it to His Apostles.—Therefore *the power or authority of spiritual rulers, too, is from God Himself for the spiritual welfare of their subjects.* Without this power or authority all religion would cease to be.

You see, then, that *God Himself has appointed two powers, the spiritual and the temporal, for the welfare of human society. To the spiritual power He has committed the guidance of souls, to the temporal power He has entrusted the maintenance of peace and order among men. (Repeat together).*

c) Let us think again of our Christian soldiers. Their commander-in-chief was the Emperor. At the head of the legion was captain Mauritius. Therefore he also had a higher power or authority; he was a *superior* of the soldiers, the soldiers were his *inferiors* or subjects.—You, too, are now inferiors or subjects: you are pupils, the teachers are your superiors. When a child's parents die, the child is placed with strangers, who take care of it. These strangers are not the real, or the natural, parents of that child, but merely its foster-parents; they are now the superiors of that child. When you leave school, the boys generally hire out with some employer; many girls enter the employ of some mistress. Now all these persons—*foster-parents, teachers, employers, mistresses, and other lawful superiors,* have also higher powers or authority over those under their charge. They are representatives of the parents. Therefore they have some of the

power or authority of the parents, and that power or authority comes from God Himself.

2. Now if superiors have a share in the power or authority of God, have they not a great dignity?—Therefore they ought also to take God for their model. Christ, the Good Shepherd, laid down His life for His sheep (John x, 11). But if superiors have great powers and dignity, they have also *duties.* Alas! how often do not superiors forget their duties towards their subjects. The Emperor in our story had not any care for the soldiers of his army. Why, did he not even try to lead them into sin? Yes, he gave them a bad example by offering sacrifice to the idols. How differently did not the Christian captain Mauritius act! He took the best possible care of his soldiers; he gave them the best of advice, and at the same time he set them a good example by boldly professing his Faith, even though he knew that it meant his death. Our Catechism says: **It is the duty of superiors to take good care of all under their charge and give them proper direction and example.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

(Let me show you that more in detail. *Temporal rulers* must do all in their power to promote the welfare of their subjects. They must be just to all; they must be kind to all, especially to the poor and the needy. They must also be patterns of virtue to their subjects. Why? Because all superiors are like a city built on a mountain: the eyes of all the people are on them. Woe! betide them, if they lead a bad and scandalous life!—*Spiritual rulers,* too, have even a greater obligation, for they have charge, not indeed of the body only, but rather of immortal souls. How great, then, is not their responsibility in the Lord's sight! The Church commands all pastors of souls to offer the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass for the members of their flock every Sunday and on all the holydays of the year. Employers may not treat their help harshly; on the contrary, they must pay them a just wage. St. Paul says: "Masters,

do to your servants that which is just and equal, knowing that you also have a Master in Heaven" (Coll. iv, 1). The same is true of teachers, magistrates, foster-parents, and all other lawful superiors. Remember this, dear children, for some day you, too, will become superiors over others).

3. a) The loyalty of Mauritius and his soldiers was put to the test, yes, that test was as fierce and searching as fire is. The Emperor issued the strict order: "Let all Christian soldiers appear at the sacrifices!" Now what did these heroes of the Christian Faith do? Did they perhaps scold about the unjust, cruel Emperor, or say wicked things against him? No, that would have been unchristian. Even when superiors command something unjust, a Christian may not despise them or hold them in contempt. Then it is a question of bearing all with Christian patience for the love of God. We may never forget the reverence we owe our superiors. **We are bound to honor Bishops, pastors, magistrates, teachers, and other lawful superiors.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).* 4. a) To act otherwise would be a sin against the fourth Commandment. **The fourth Commandment forbids all contempt towards our lawful superiors.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

3. b) Did our Christian soldiers perhaps become unfaithful to their Emperor? Others might indeed have done so; but true Christians do not act like that. For St. Paul teaches: "Let every soul be subject to the higher power: for there is no power but from God" (Rom. xiii, 1). Thus did our Christian heroes act. Captain Mauritius said to the Emperor: "Send us against the enemy and we will obey at once!" That was a truly Christian answer! Obedience is the duty of every Christian.—**We are bound to obey our Bishops, pastors, magistrates, teachers, and other lawful superiors.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).* To act in any other manner would be a sin against the fourth Commandment. 4. b) **The fourth Commandment for-**

bids all stubbornness and disobedience towards our lawful superiors. *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

Yes, more than that! Already hundreds of soldiers had fallen under the sword. Yet, all the others were ready to give their life for their Emperor. They sent word to him, saying: "Command us to fight the enemy and die, and we will obey!" Thus do true Christians speak and act. They were prepared to make *the tribute of their blood* for their Emperor, to lay down their lives for their country. To sacrifice one's life in defense of one's country on the battle-field is a Christian duty. But in times of peace we must pay our *legitimate taxes,* which our lawful superiors impose upon us. For temporal rulers must govern the country; and for this taxes are necessary. Consequently subjects must pay all lawful taxes conscientiously. Jesus Himself has said: "Render unto Caesar the things that are Caeser's" (Matt. xxii, 21). That refers to the secular or temporal powers. But in regard to the spiritual powers these words hold true: "He that despiseth you, despiseth Me" (Luke x, 16).

5. But if obedience is the duty of a Christian, why did not the soldiers obey the Emperor's command?—The Emperor ordered: "All must take part in the sacrifices!" May a Christian do that? That would be idolatry. But God Himself has said: "Thou shalt believe in one God and Him alone shalt thou adore." Who is higher, God or the Emperor?—Therefore Mauritius answered rightly: "Emperor! we are Christians and we will remain Christians. We will never offer sacrifices to the false gods!" Those were words worthy of a Christian man. And all the soldiers sent the message to the Emperor: "We must hear God more than man!" That was a fitting answer. Thus did the Apostles also answer. The Jewish High Council wanted to forbid them to preach. But Peter spoke boldly and fearlessly: "We must hear God more than man" (Acts of Apostles, v, 29). God's Commandments are higher

than the commands of men. Hence when parents or superiors command something that is sinful, may we obey them?—No; for then they are not God's representatives, but rather the enemies of God.—**We are commanded by the fourth Commandment to honor, love and obey our parents, and other superiors, in all that is not sin.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

Write on the blackboard:

1. Duties of superiors—to take good care of all under their charge and to give them proper direction and example.

2. Duties of inferiors — to honor, love, obey their superiors—in all that is not sin (4).

3. Sins of inferiors—to despise and disobey lawful superiors.

Synthesis. We Christians have sacred duties towards God, but also towards God's representatives. We have learned that today. Who are God's representatives? Who are our temporal rulers? our spiritual rulers? Are foster-parents, teachers, employers, etc., also our superiors? From whom do the temporal and the spiritual powers come? What duties do we owe to temporal and spiritual powers? How does a person sin against the fourth Commandment? Must we obey our superiors in all things? *(Have the pupils read the answers from the Catechism. Assign the lesson for the next class).*

Application. 1. We can learn two things from our heroes of the Christian Faith: to be obedient and to be disobedient. *To be obedient!* You are still pupils. Your teachers are your superiors; they are God's representatives. It is their duty to educate you to become good children of the world, but especially true children of God. You can see for yourselves: that is a great dignity, but at the same time a great burden. What is, therefore, your duty?—Just as you must honor and obey your parents, so too you are in duty bound to honor and obey your teachers. The Divine Child Jesus

is your model. He sanctified the school. In the temple He was a pupil among the doctors. Are you an image of Him? Are you attentive in school? Do you conscientiously perform your tasks? Do you promptly do what you are told to do? Or do you perhaps scold about your teachers and speak evil of them? Bad and lazy pupils say at once: "The teacher has no use for me!" That is a lazy excuse. Examine your conscience also in regard to your sins in school and tell them sincerely in confession.—

But you must learn also a second lesson: *to be disobedient!* What do I mean?—Just think of the three young men in the fiery furnace! The king threatened them with death, if they did not offer sacrifice to the gods. But these young men disobeyed the order of the king. That was right and their duty. Who else acted in that way? — The Machabean brothers and their mother; the venerable old man, Eleazar, the holy Martyrs.—They all knew: "We must hear God more than man!" They preferred to die rather than be disobedient to God.

2. Employers and mistresses, too, must treat their servants and employees kindly. In the house of St. Monica, who in after life became the mother of the great St. Augustine, there lived an old servant, who was much respected on account of her great experience and eminent virtues. She was regarded as one of the members of the family. To her care were entrusted the children of the family, and they were obliged to obey her. Indeed, it was to this old servant that St. Monica was indebted for her excellent training. In every place, and under all circumstances, she never ceased instructing and educating this Saint. St. Monica was not forgetful of all the care she had bestowed upon her, but ever afterwards she proved her gratitude to this old and prudent servant. A long time after the death of this good woman Monica still spoke of her attention and kindness, and often she became the subject of conversation.

LESSON XXI.

Sins Against Life and Limb.

Catechetical Unit:

1) What is the fifth Commandment? L. XXXIII, Q. 366.

2) What is forbidden by the fifth Commandment? L. XXXIII, Q. 368 (in part).

3) What are we commanded by the fifth Commandment? L. XXXIII, Q. 367 (in part).

Preparation. Dear children, it is God's holy will that we honor and obey His representatives upon earth, our lawful superiors. Let us first review this lesson *(Question the pupils briefly on the preceding lesson)*. —The human body is a wonderful creation from the hand of God. What is it that makes the body live?— The soul makes the body alive. But at some time or other the soul must leave the body. When will that happen? That lies hidden in God's hands. God has given us life, only God can take it again from us. Man may not lay violent hands upon human life. The fifth Commandment protects life. Let us say the fifth Commandment together. **The fifth Commandment is: Thou shalt not kill.** *(Use the blackboard; see the diagram below just above the synthesis)*.—By this Commandment God means to say, that you may not do anything to injure yourselves or your neighbors as regards life and limb. But many sins are committed against this Commandment.

Aim. We shall learn of that today: namely *of the sins against life and limb*.—Already in the first human family we find one, who seriously sinned against human life—Cain, the murderer of his brother.

Presentation. Once Cain offered a sacrifice to the Lord of the first fruits of the field. Abel, his brother, made a sacrifice of the firstlings of his flock. God looked down with pleasure upon Abel and his sacrifice;

He had no regard for Cain and his offerings. Seeing this Cain became exceedingly angry, and his countenance fell.

The Lord spoke to him, saying: "Why art thou angry? And why is thy countenance fallen? If thou dost well, shalt thou not receive? but if ill, shall not sin forthwith be present at the door? Keep away from sin!"

But Cain did not heed the Lord. One day he said to his brother: "Let us go forth abroad." Abel suspecting no evil, went along with him. When they were in the field, Cain rose up against his brother and slew him.

But God, Who sees all things, had seen the deed. He said to Cain: "Where is thy brother, Abel?" Cain replied in an insolent manner: "I know not; am I my brother's keeper?" But God said: "What hast thou done? The voice of thy brother's blood crieth to Me from the earth. Now, therefore, cursed shalt thou be upon the earth, which hath opened her mouth and received the blood of thy brother at thy hand. When thou shalt till it, it shall not yield thee its fruit. A fugitive and a vagabond shalt thou be upon the earth!"

Then Cain cried out in despair: "My iniquity is greater than that I may deserve pardon. Behold! Thou dost cast me out this day from the face of the earth. Every one, therefore, who findeth me, will kill me." But the Lord God answered: "No, it shall not be so; but whosoever shall kill Cain, shall be punished sevenfold." And God set a mark upon Cain, that whosoever found him should not kill him. And Cain, the murderer of his brother, took his wife from his family and went forth from the face of the Lord, and dwelt as a fugitive in a strange land. But nowhere did he find peace. *(Show the children a large picture of this scene).*

Explanation. 1. a) So deeply can man fall, if he gives in to his wicked passions. Cain was a slave of his envy and anger; thus he became a murderer of his own brother. But murder is a sin, which cries to

Heaven for vengeance. God Himself has said that: "The blood of thy brother cries to Me from the earth!" The shedding of human blood demands satisfaction. Therefore the Lord spoke these words of thunder: "Cain, cursed shalt thou be upon the earth!" Then fear and despair seized upon the murderer's heart. No longer did he find a single hour of peace and quiet upon earth. And where may his soul be now?—**The fifth Commandment forbids all wilful murder.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

But tell me, why is murder such a great crime?—Cain robbed his brother of his most precious earthly treasure, his life. He could never give it back to him again. Abel had lived a good life indeed, and he also died a good death. But what if a person were to die suddenly in mortal sin, and had to appear before God's judgment-seat?—In that case the murderer would also have robbed his victim of eternal life, and would have upon his conscience also the murder of a soul. How is he to make satisfaction for that guilt? He can never do it for all eternity. Do you now understand why God has said so sternly: "Thou shalt not kill?"

b) Of course, not every man goes as far as Cain did. But it is also a sin against life and limb to strike or wound another in an unjust manner. How shocking and brutal is it not, to see men fighting with each other, showering blows upon each other, so that the blood flows? Really thereby men are brought down to the level of brute animals. That, too, is forbidden by the fifth Commandment. **The fifth Commandment forbids all fighting** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).* Every man is a child of God, as you know. Do you think that the heavenly Father can bear to see men injuring His children in an unjust manner?

2. St. John says: "God is charity" (I Ep. iv, 8); and He wants us to imitate His example. Therefore He has told us through His own dear Son, Jesus Christ: "Love thy neighbor as thyself!" "Do unto others as you would that they should do unto you!" He wants

us to practise the Golden Rule, as we learned in one of the former lessons. It is our duty, then, to have the greatest regard, or respect, for our neighbor's rights. We must try to avoid every act, that would harm our neighbor in his life or his body. You remember the corporal works of mercy, do you not? That should be our rule in life: to promote our neighbor's bodily welfare. Our Catechism says: **We are commanded by the fifth Commandment to respect our neighbor's rights and to seek his bodily welfare.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

3. But Cain did not become a murderer all at once. How did he come to perform that wicked deed?—God looked down with pleasure upon Abel's sacrifice. That made Cain pale with *envy;* his eyes glowed with wild *anger.* But anger eats its way more and more into a man's heart. Anger gradually turns into *hatred.* Cain could no longer bear the sight of his brother; he could no longer speak a kind word to him; he could not any longer look him in the face. Even when he saw him in the distance, immediately the flame of anger would flare up in a red-hot glow. Then the fire would rage. And where there is fighting and *quarreling,* there generally are words of cursing and scolding too. Cain said to himself: "Oh! if only I would never see him again. If only he were dead! I just feel like killing him!" Do you see? He had thoughts of murder, or *revenge,* in his heart. St. John once said: "He that hateth his brother is a murderer" (I Ep. iii, 15). From now on that monster waited for the chance, and quickly the frightful deed was done. Cain's wicked passions had led him to perform that wicked deed.—Therefore God **in the fifth Commandment forbids all anger, hatred and revenge.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).* God detests all such wickedness. 4. **We are commanded by the fifth Commandment to live in peace and union with our neighbor.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

5. It is also possible for one to kill another slowly and by degrees, as it were. How can that be? Cain could no longer bear the sight of his brother. Do you not think, that Cain's scolding and cursing hurt Abel most severely? I believe, that Abel lost all pleasure of living; for worry embitters one's life. And do you not think, that Cain's colding and cursing hurt Abel? Yes, Abel would not have been able to endure that very long; for harsh treatment shortens one's life.—*The fifth Commandment forbids us to embitter and shorten our neighbor's life by vexation and harsh treatment. (Repeat together).*—Cain also embittered the life of his parents. How sad it must have made the hearts of Adam and Eve, when they heard about the bloody deed of their son! I believe, that they nearly blinded themselves by their constant weeping. To have a murderer for a son, what sorrow for a father's and mother's heart! But vexation and worry eat away one's strength and life. Just think of old father Jacob who said: "You will bring my gray hairs down into the grave!"

6. But Cain also sinned against his *own life.* Why? —He carried such an awful anger and hatred about in his heart, that his countenance fell; that is, his face became haggard and sunken and pale. God Himself asked him: "Why art thou angry? and why is thy countenance fallen?" *Envy* and *anger* are two wicked brothers; they *weaken or impair one's health and shorten one's life. (Repeat together).* The Holy Ghost Himself has said that: "Envy and anger shorten a man's life" (Ecclesiasticus xxx, 26).—There are other enemies, too, of one's health and life, particularly intemperate eating, and even more so, intemperate drinking. Many a man destroys his mind by excessive drinking, or eats and drinks away his health and finally death draws him down into the grave. Upon the gravestone of many a person one can write truthfully: "Here lies a man who has taken his own life; he has killed himself by drink!" Where may such a man's

soul be now? Perhaps where Dives is panting and sighing for a single drop of water.—*We sin against our own life and health, if we impair our health or shorten our life by intemperate eating and drinking, by envy, anger, hatred, etc. (Repeat together).*

7. Ever since Cain committed the crime of murdering his brother, he no longer had a moment of peace and quiet anywhere. Like a fugitive he wandered over the face of the earth, without a home, without peace, without happiness. When in such moments of unhappiness despair grasped him with its claws like a wild animal seizes its victim, Oh! how sad he must have felt at heart.—Perhaps then he said to himself: "I cannot stand this life any longer. I am going to do something to myself. I will put an end to my life!" That would have been the worst crime of all, to commit self-murder or suicide. *The fifth Commandment forbids all wilful self-murder or suicide. (Repeat together; use the blackboard).*—God wants us to take proper care of our life and health. **We are commanded by the fifth Commandment to take proper care of our own life and health.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*—Some people imagine, of course, that it is not such a wicked thing after all to commit suicide. They say: "Oh! that happens every day." Is that so? Just tell me who has given you life? Have you not received it from Almighty God? Yes, God alone is Lord over life and death. He has given life to us all; and He alone may take it away again from us. But the self-murderer says: "But I do not want to live any longer!" Therefore he violates God's sacred rights over man's life in the most contemptuous manner. And is not that something very wicked? A self-murderer commits a two-fold crime: for he murders his own soul and body. The very same thing will happen to such a person as happened to Judas: he will burn in fire and will never be consumed. Moreover, no priest may attend his funeral; no prayers will be offered for the repose of

his soul and no Divine services will be conducted at his grave. Thus does the Church punish suicides.

But does not man cling to life, and has not man fear of death? How then can a person inflict death upon himself?—Here is a person without religion, who says to himself: "With death all is over!" Therefore if he grows tired of life, he puts himself out of the way. Here is another man who has been leading a very impure and sinful life; finally he gets disgusted with himself, becomes a burden to himself. Then the devil comes and drives such a poor unfortunate to suicide. But many a person is "out of his mind," and has lost the use of his reason either wholly or partially. In regard to such a one we must say: "Oh Lord! forgive him for he knows not what he does." Neither does the Church want to punish such a poor man, and she prays for him, saying: "O Lord! give unto him eternal rest!"

Write on the blackboard:

1. "Thou shalt not kill!"
2. Sins against the fifth Commandment:
   a) wilful murder; b) unjust fighting or quarreling; c) anger, hatred, revenge; d) suicide.
3. Duties commanded by the fifth Commandment:
   a) to respect our neighbor's rights and to seek his bodily welfare; b) to live in peace and union with our neighbor; c) to take proper care of our life and health.

Synthesis. The story of Cain, the murderer of his brother, is indeed a story of blood and terror. It admonishes us all: "Thou shalt not kill!" What is the fifth Commandment? What does this Commandment forbid? What does it command? What does St. John say of murder? How must we treat our neighbor? How can we shorten the life and health of our neighbor or ourselves? Is that a sin against the fifth Commandment? Is suicide a sin against this Commandment? How does the Church punish the self-murderer? *(Have the pupils read the answers from the Catechism. Assign the lesson for the next class).*

Application. 1. Murder is a capital crime. The courts punish murder with death. But may the courts inflict death?—The Judge of the Supreme Court has his power from God. St. Paul says expressly: "Princes (temporal rulers) bear not the sword in vain" (Rom. xiii, 4). Whoever robs his brother of his life, has lost the right to his own life. "Whoever shall shed man's blood, his blood shall be shed" (Gen. ix, 6). Who else may kill?—The soldier may kill the enemy in battle, and thereby he commits no sin. Every man may in self-defense kill his enemy. A robber attacks a traveler.—A savage aims at a hunter.—A wicked man wants to rob a child of its innocence.—Of course, one is not allowed to overstep the limits of self-defense. If a person, who is attacked unjustly, can render his enemy powerless by wounding him, he may not go so far as to take away his life.

2. Did you ever hear of *duelling?*—A person has injured or offended another. The person offended or injured challenges his enemy to fight a duel. They attack each other with swords or pistols or knives, or shoot each other, or inflict serious wounds upon each other. What do you think of such conduct?—These two persons are in God's sight no better than two ruffians or even two murderers and self-murderers. In punishment they are excommunicated from the Church. Christ says: "Love your enemies!" God says: "Revenge is mine, and I will repay them in due time" (Deut xxxii, 35).

3. But there is also such a thing as *careless killing.* A boy plays with a gun. In fun he aims it at a companion, saying: "Look out, I am going to shoot!" At that moment the shot goes off and the accident has occurred. "Oh! I thought it was not loaded." That is a foolish excuse. A bad boy throws stones; one of his companions thereby suffers the loss of an eye.—That is *careless injury to one's life and limb.* Another person is about to sit down, when some one pulls away the chair from under him.—Striking another, too, is for-

bidden. A father punishes his son.—That is perfectly proper; most likely the boy deserves that whipping. God Himself says, that a father ought not to spare the rod, and thereby spoil the child. (Proverbs xii, 24).

(Here the catechist may say a few words in regard to torturing animals).

4. Suicide, too, is a capital crime. God punishes the self-murderer with eternal death. The pagans thought, indeed, that when a person gets old and useless, or when he gets sick unto death, he ought to commit suicide. And they did it, too. Many heathens do that still in our day. In China the children learn from their earliest youth to put an end to their life, if life becomes unbearable for them. Parents and teachers even show the children how to kill themselves. How can men be so blind? They know nothing of Christianity, of course. A Christian thinks otherwise: "If I am no longer fit to work or to earn money, I can, nevertheless, earn Heaven by my sufferings and trials." He looks up to Heaven and prays: "God, for love of Thee, I will bear all patiently!" Many a man earns more for Heaven in his old or sick days than during his entire life.

5. To die!—that never enters your minds. But did you ever expose yourselves to danger of death? A bold boy climbs to the top of a high tree. How easily cannot a dry limb break and throw that dare-devil to the ground? A braggard ventures to walk upon the thin ice. Have you never injured your health? Here is a child that is overheated, and yet, it drinks cold water. Another person makes a bet, that he can eat or drink so much without stopping. I have already heard of children, who have drunk beer and whiskey just like grown people. That is injurious to your health. Do you know why? All such drinks contain alcohol; but alcohol is a poison, especially for children. Doctors say: Children do not need intoxicating drinks; such drinks rather hurt the health of children.

LESSON XXII.

Scandal.

Catechetical Unit:

1) What is forbidden by the fifth Commandment? L. XXXIII, Q. 386 (in part).

2) What are we commanded by the fifth Commandment? L. XXXIII, Q. 367 (in part).

Preparation. Dear children, it is possible for one to injure another in his body and also in his soul. In the last class we learned about the sins against the body of our neighbor. *(Question the pupils briefly on the preceding lesson).*—But how is it possible for one to injure one's neighbor as regards the life of his soul? Just imagine, that one of you is allowed to take a ride in a boat on the great ocean. Out there, where the water is deepest, suddenly the sailor grabs you around the waist. You struggle against him with hands and feet, but all in vain. The unmerciful man places a rope about your neck, ties a great stone to it, and throws you overboard into the deep waters. At once the stone drags you downwards to the bottom, and you must drown miserably. That would be a frightful death, would it not? But just such a death a person deserves, who gives a bad example, or scandal, to his neighbor. But you must understand that correctly. To give scandal means to lead another into evil. We shall learn of that today.

Aim. I am going to show you: *what a terrible sin scandal is.*—But first I shall relate to you a story, that you know from the Old Testament. It is about the heroic old man, Eleazar.

Presentation. King Antiochus of Syria had conquered Jerusalem and plundered the temple. Now he wanted to lead the Jewish people away from the true God, too, and to make them commit idolatry. Whoever still retained the Book of the Law and kept the Sabbath holy

was charged with being an enemy of the State and was put to death. But apostate Jews received places of honor and also obtained the property of their murdered brethren. Many of the Jews abandoned the Faith of their fathers, but many remained faithful to the Lord until death.

Among the loyal men of that age was to be reckoned a distinguished Scribe. It was Eleazar, an old man of ninety years, who in spite of his advanced age, was still erect and full of dignity. His enemies commanded him to transgress the law and to eat the meat of the swine. Eleazar refused. They wanted, then, to compel him and opened his mouth by force. Eleazar resisted. Then they decreed his death.

Some friends, who were present, took the old man aside and besought him to have meat brought to him, that was allowed by the Jewish law. He was to eat of that meat, and thus pretend that he was eating of the forbidden meat. In that way he could escape death. Eleazar answered: "It is unworthy of my old age to play the hypocrite. The young men will think, that old Eleazar of ninety years of age has become a heathen. I would become for them a seducer and that would bring disgrace upon my gray hairs. And what would it profit me, if I did escape the torture of men? I cannot escape the hand of the Almighty either dead or alive. Therefore I will die manfully for the holy law."

After these words he was tied to the rack of torture and beaten most cruelly. When near death, he sighed: "Lord! Thou knowest that I gladly endure these sufferings, because I fear Thee." Thus did Eleazar die, leaving to all the people a glorious example of heroism.

Explanation. 1. a) That was a beautiful death, truly a heroic death. Eleazar lost temporal life and found instead eternal life. What a happy exchange: brief sufferings, eternal joys! What did his friends

want him to do?—They wanted to persuade the venerable old man to eat of the sacrificial meat, at least to pretend that he was eating it. However, that would have been idolatry. Therefore these friends aimed at leading the old man into sin, at seducing him. That was scandal.—*We injure our neighbor as to his soul, when we scandalize him, that is, when we deliberately seduce him to sin. (Repeat together).* The old man, of course, preferred to die rather than to commit sin.

b) But just think! Suppose Eleazar had really listened to the voice of his seducers, or tempters, what would have happened?—Perhaps he might have been lost forever. But not only that; many of the people might have imitated his *bad example,* and likewise have fallen away from the Faith. What would they have thought to themselves?—"If old Eleazar may do that, we, too, may do it." His bad example would have been for them an incentive and an occasion to sin. But could Eleazar have made this excuse: "I did not want to be the occasion of sin to others?"—That is indeed true; but one could plainly foresee, that others would have imitated his example. Therefore he would, nevertheless, have been the cause of their sin.—That too, is *scandal, when we give our neighbor occasion to sin. (Repeat together).* The noble old man was unwilling to give such scandal for any price. Therefore he said so beautifully: "I will die manfully for the holy law." Our Catechism says: **The fifth Commandment forbids all bad example.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard; see the diagram below just above the synthesis).*

2. God is charity. He wants us to love Him above all things, and our neighbor as ourselves for the love of Him. But is that true charity to lead others to rebel against God by sin? Is it a sign of charity towards our neighbor to be the occasion of leading him into eternal perdition by our bad example?—How do we show our charity to the soul of our neighbor? The spiritual works of mercy tell us how to express our love for the soul of our neighbor. Our Catechism

says: **We are commanded by the fifth Commandment to seek our neighbor's spiritual welfare.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

3. Now it must be plain to you how wicked it is to give bad example or scandal to one's neighbor. But I am going to show you even more clearly how bad it is. Do you know the first seducer?—It was the devil. He already lied to our first parents and deceived them and led them to sin. He robbed them of the most precious treasure, the life of grace, and thus murdered their souls. Jesus Himself has said that: "The devil was a murderer from the beginning" (John vii, 44). What then were those friends, that tried to lead Eleazar to commit sin?—They were helpers of the devil and murderers of souls. Can there by anything more terrible than to be a helper of the devil and a murderer of the soul? Just consider how precious a single soul is! In every soul there shines forth the image and likeness of God. To every soul there clings the Blood of Jesus Christ; for Jesus has redeemed it from Hell and purchased it for Heaven. Therefore a single human soul is worth more than a whole kingdom, yes, more than the whole world; for heaven and earth will pass away, but the soul is immortal. That ought to deter every one from the sin of scandal or bad example: *The thought that he who gives scandal is a minister of Satan, destroying those souls which Jesus Christ has ransomed by His Blood, by seducing them to sin. (Repeat together).*

4. But the worst is still to come. If Eleazar had really become an idolator, would he have seduced only one person? No, most probably hundreds would have imitated his wicked example. There you see plainly enough, that scandal is like a contagious disease. A single sick person can be the cause of the death of thousands. A single seducer can cast thousands into perdition.—Or just think of a glacier: in the beginning it is very small; but it grows bigger and bigger, and in the end it tears away immense masses of ice and

rocks and trees with it on its course down the mountain side. So too, a single seducer can draw down with him into the abyss of sin and perdition thousands of souls. Are not those awful consequences?—*The dreadful consequences of scandal, or bad example, ought to deter us from giving scandal, since those who have themselves been seduced, generally seduce others, and thus sin is continually propagated. (Repeat together).* Let us always remember that, for the seducer must some day give an account for all that before the judgment-seat of Jesus Christ.

5. Consequently I am not all surprised that Jesus once spoke those terrible words: "Woe to him, who giveth scandal." And at another time He said: "He that shall scandalize one of these little ones, that believeth in Me, it were better for him that a millstone be hanged about his neck, and that he should be drowned in the depth of the sea" (Matt. xviii, 6). Those are frightful words. The little ones are the innocent ones, who know nothing of evil. And you have already seen a millstone: it is immensely big and heavy. Now you will be able to understand, what the Saviour means.—Whoever leads others to commit sin, ought to have a millstone tied about his neck, and be thrown into the depths of the sea, so that he can never come out again. He is not worthy of being kept on the earth any longer, so wicked is he. Do you hear? That is what Jesus says, Who is otherwise so good and mild and gentle.

6. Now let us suppose, that Eleazar had really committed that terrible sin: how would he have been obliged to satisfy for that sin?—Above all things he would have had to feel sorry for that scandal in all sincerity. But that is far from being enough; he would likewise have had to confess his guilt openly before all the people and ask pardon of all. For a public scandal must also be satisfied for in a public manner. Only thus could he have repaired the evil to a certain extent. That must be done in the case of

every scandal or bad example.—*We must not only repent and confess the sin, but we must also, as far as is in our power, repair the evil we have done. (Repeat together).* Whoever does not do that, will go into eternity with the sin upon his soul, and he can never make good again the evil he has done.—Now tell me yourselves, is it an easy matter to satisfy for scandal or bad example? Generally it is simply impossible to do it. But what if the seduced soul dies in sin? Now you can understand better why the Divine Saviour threatens, saying: "Woe to the man, who scandalizeth another!"

Write on the blackboard:

1. Sins against the fifth Commandment: scandal or bad example.
2. Duties commanded by the fifth Commandment: to seek the spiritual welfare of our neighbor.

Synthesis. To seduce others means to murder souls. Do not forget that, so that you may never be guilty of such a crime. A splendid example worthy of your imitation is the heroic old man Eleazar. How can we be guilty of injuring our neighbor as to his soul? There is a twofold kind of scandal: scandal by seducing others to sin, and scandal by bad example. What ought to keep us especially from committing this sin? What does Jesus say about this sin? What does the fifth Commandment command? What must we do, if we have injured our neighbor as to his soul? *(Have the pupils read the answers from the Catechism. Assign the lesson for the next class).*

Application. 1. *There have always been scandals.* Already the Bible History tells us of scandals. Joseph was in the house of Putiphar. The wicked wife of Putiphar spoke wicked things to Joseph and tried to seduce him to commit sin. But Joseph ran away from her as from a poisonous snake. He acted in the right way.—Susanna, too, was in danger of sin. The two old men wanted to seduce her to sin. But she was un-

willing to sin at any cost under the eyes of God.—King Nabuchodonosor wanted to persuade the three young men and to force them to adore the golden statue. They preferred to allow themselves to be cast into the fiery furnace. And for that God preserved them from harm in a miraculous manner.

2. *The world is still filled with scandals.* Here is a person that laughs and scoffs at prayer and confession and going to church, and makes fun of everything sacred and holy.—He is a seducer. Keep away from him! Another person curses every other moment. One would almost imagine that the earth would have to open up and swallow such a sinner. Other people hear that talk. At first they entertain themselves with the thoughts of such language; but soon they themselves take a part in it.—Such a person is a giver of scandal or bad example. I would not want to have any thing to do with such a man. Another person carries on immodest, filthy talk.—Flee from such a one! He is more dangerous than a poisonous serpent. Another person is guilty of committing immodest acts. He says: "Oh! that is nothing; others do it too." Do not trust such a person! The devil spoke like that too. He is a liar and a deceiver and a seducer.

3. It is Sunday. A pupil says to his comrade: "Come, let us go out for a walk today, and stay away from church!" Do you know what Christ once said to Peter, because Peter wanted to keep Him from suffering? "Go behind Me, Satan, thou art a scandal unto Me" (Matt. xvi, 23). You, too, say that to such a wicked comrade: "Away from me, you child of the devil. You are trying to seduce me!"

4. *Have you ever seduced others?* Your brothers and sisters, your companions, your friends? Did you perhaps keep them away from church? Did you teach them to steal? "This is how you must do it!" Did you urge them to tell lies? "This is what you must say at home!" "Do not say anything about that to my

father, otherwise look out for yourself!" Or did you perhaps even teach them to do immodest things? Do not do that any more! You do not want to be helpers of Satan, do you? If, however, such a thing has happened, say to that child, whom you have seduced: "I beg you, do not do that any more, and confess that sin!" Otherwise how easily it might happen, that such a poor soul will be lost forever. What kind of a meeting that would be in eternity!

5. *Have you ever led others into sin by your bad example?* How often does not that happen! A child utters a curse word every few moments; it is disobedient and saucy to its mother. The smaller children hear and see that, and imitate that bad example. Who is to blame for that?—Who must answer for that?—A child acts in a stubborn manner in school. That is a bad example for the other children. Examine your consciences: Did you act like that too? Did you accuse yourselves of that in confession?

6. *Never allow yourselves to be seduced by your brothers or sisters, or companions, or even by grown up people!* Jesus Himself warns you: "Beware of false prophets, who come to you in the clothing of sheep, but inwardly are ravening wolves!" (Matt. vii, 15). Yes, that is so: seducers act beautifully and friendly to one's face, as though they were innocent lambs; but inwardly they are full of wickedness like ravenous wolves, and only look to bring about your perdition. Even good friends are at times false prophets. Beware of them!

LESSON XXIII.

(1) Sins Against Purity.

Catechetical Unit:

1) What is the sixth Commandment? L. XXXIII, Q. 369.

2) What are we commanded by the sixth Commandment? L. XXXIII, Q. 370.

3) What is forbidden by the sixth Commandment? L. XXXIII, Q. 371.

4) Does the sixth Commandment forbid the reading of bad and immodest books and newspapers? L. XXXIII, Q. 372.

(N. B. This instruction might better be given in two separate lessons. In the first lesson the catechist will treat of the sins of impurity; in the second lesson he will speak of the safeguards to purity. Two extremes are to be avoided here: on the one hand, the catechist may not speak so plainly as thereby to injure the hearts of children, who may still be innocent; on the other hand, he may not speak in such general and indefinite terms as to leave the children unable to grasp the essence of the subject under discussion. We have endeavored to find the golden mean. Let the catechist prepare himself well for this lesson, and then let him present the matter freely and slowly, with deep earnestness and dignity. But let him avoid all unnecessary questioning. The subject itself will command the undivided attention of the pupils).

Preparation. Dear children, we must respect the bodily and the spiritual rights of our neighbor. In the foregoing lesson we have learned the ways in which a person can injure his neighbor as to his soul. Let us first review this lesson. *(Question the pupils briefly on the preceding lesson).*—Our body is a little gift of God. At Baptism our body has been consecrated to be a little church of God by the Holy Ghost. This body will some day be laid in the grave and corrupt; but it will arise again, wonderfully beautiful and transfigured as the Body of Christ on Easter morning. Then it is to be placed as a living sacred image before the throne of God. May a Christian, then, misuse his body for sinful deeds? No, we must treat the body like a sancturary of God.

Because the human body is holy, therefore, too, do we keep it covered with clothing. Some parts of the body we always keep covered, even while bathing. Already the feeling of modesty demands that; and that feeling has been given to us by God as a Guardian Angel. A good child would feel ashamed to appear

before others entirely naked, or to look upon itself with wicked pleasure, or to touch itself without necessity. Such a child we call a modest child. What other words can we use instead of modest?—Chaste, pure, honorable, innocent. But a child, that is not ashamed of such things, is an immodest child; instead of immodest we can also say unchaste, impure, dishonorable.—Chastity (purity, innocence) is the most beautiful of all the virtues; immodesty (impurity, lust) is the most ugly of all sins. It is God's will that we keep ourselves pure and innocent; therefore He gave us the sixth Commandment. Let us say it together: **The sixth Commandment is: Thou shalt not commit adultery.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard; see the diagram below just above the synthesis).*

Aim. Today and in the next class I am going to tell you: *how carefully you ought to preserve this precious jewel, chastity, in your hearts.*—You all know St. Aloysius. He is called the "angelic" youth because he lived as pure and innocent as an angel. I shall first relate to you, how conscientiously this Saint watched over his purity and chastity.

Presentation. Boys like to play soldiers. Aloysius, too, loved as a boy to be with the soldiers. There, of course, he heard much bad conversation. In his childish ignorance the little fellow often repeated the curse words and the immodest talk he had heard. His guardian heard it and gave him this earnest rebuke: "Aloysius, that is not right; that is a sin!" From that moment he never again spoke such words. But if he happened to hear others using that sort of talk, he would blush and look down upon the ground for shame. These little faults were his greatest sins. All during his life Aloysius felt a bitter sorrow and sadness in his heart over what he had said, as though he had committed very grievous sins.

At the age of nine years the boy went to the princely court at Florence. There a little book on the holy

Rosary fell into his hands. Aloysius read that book, and the more he read, the greater did his love for God's Mother grow. Once while reading the thought suddenly came to him: "I should like to give real joy to the heavenly Mother Mary!" And he made the vow: "I will preserve my innocence throughout my whole life." Mary placed him as her child under her motherly protection, so that from that hour the little Saint never again had an impure temptation.

To be sure, Aloysius was also extremely watchful. Anxiously he guarded his eyes; he did not want to see anything, that could be dangerous, even in the least degree. While walking in the street, he did not look about curiously, but rather turned his eyes modestly to the ground. In the morning upon arising from bed, scarcely did he put his foot from bed, when he at once covered it, so that he might not see it naked. When dressing he had to allow his servant to assist him. That was not to his liking, because he was ashamed to allow others to see him half clothed. At the same time the young Saint was very strict with his body. He did that for love of the Suffering Saviour; for he wanted to suffer a little too for love of Jesus. Once Aloysius was told to play with two little princesses, who were still children; but he ran away. At another time he was asked to dance with a girl; he fled. One day he together with several other young men visited a distinguished old man. This man took the liberty of telling some immodest jokes. Aloysius, afire with holy anger, interrupted him, saying: "Surely that is unworthy of a nobleman to use such language in the presence of young men!"

At the age of fourteen years Aloysius was ordered to go to the royal court of Spain. There the young prince was surrounded by thousands of seductive occasions and temptations, as in the midst of a fiery furnace. But nevertheless, he preserved his heart unsullied. How was that possible? He never ceased praying. For hours he knelt before the Tabernacle; that was his

dearest place, and there his heart spoke with the Heart of Jesus. Every Sunday he received Holy Communion as devoutly as an angel. He lived continually under the eyes of God and never forgot the hour of his death. Therefore there is no wonder, that his heart remained as pure as an angel in the midst of dangers. Finally he died, as pure and innocent as he had lived; he was only twenty-three years old. But now he shines as a sun in the kingdom of God for all eternity.

Explanation. 1. a) You admire this angelic youth, innocent Aloysius, do you not? Some of you will perhaps say: "Oh! if only I, too, were so pure and innocent." You, too, can preserve your innocence. Only resist right from the beginning all evil; do not allow the poisonous weeds of immodest thoughts and desires to grow in your hearts. Away with them, if impure thoughts enter into your mind! Certainly the wicked talk of the soldiers must often have come into Aloysius' mind. But did he perhaps ponder curiously on those filthy things? No; he took no pleasure in them, but rather had a deep hatred and detestation of them. Therefore neither were those thoughts sins for him. For the mere thought is not a sin, but to take wilful pleasure in bad thoughts is sinful. Aloysius was pure in thought; he kept the sixth Commandment. **We are commanded by the sixth Commandment to be pure in thought.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

Here is a child; formerly on a certain occasion it heard impure talk or saw others committing impure deeds. Now this child complains: "These wicked things continually come into my mind; but I cannot help it; I do not want to have anything to do with them!" Do not be disturbed, my child! You have no sin, because you do not take any pleasure in such thoughts. Just make a virtue of necessity as Aloysius did. What do I mean?—If in the warm summer time a bee happens to alight upon your face, you chase it away at once, do you not? For otherwise it might wound you with its sting. If an impure thought enters

your mind, drive it away at once, for otherwise it will be able to wound your soul unto death. Or if a spark falls upon your clothing, what do you do?—Impure thoughts are as dangerous as sparks of fire from Hell. Put them out of your mind immediately; or else a dangerous fire might start in your heart.

How can you do that?—Just look for a moment upon the Head of Jesus crowned with thorns. How your Saviour has satisfied for all sinful thoughts, that men may have in their minds! "Oh! Head all blood and wounded." Would you like some time to wear a fiery crown of thorns? And if a bad desire arises in your mind to see something impure, or even to do some unchaste deed, look at Jesus bound to the scourging pillar. How He has done penance in His Body for all the sins of the flesh! Do you desire at some time to be beaten with fiery scourges?

However, not all children are as conscientious as Aloysius. There are children, who entertain themselves with impure thoughts and desires as with dear friends; they always want to know more about these ~~detestable~~ things, and they ask others about them. Be on your guard against such things! Such curiosity has already led many into the most shameful sins, and has even cast them into Hell. When curiosity assails you, to know about such things, ask your mother! Our dear Lord Himself has given you your mother, in order that she might instruct you about such matters as children ought and may know.

b) Do you know how most people lose their innocence? They listen to *impure conversation.* Seduction to sin generally occurs by means of bad talk. Little Aloysius, too, heard filthy talk and even repeated it. To be sure, he did not lose his innocence. He was only six years old, and did not understand at all what he was saying. If he had known how detestable these things are in God's sight, he surely would not have done that. Afterwards his guardian told him, saying: "Aloysius, that is a sin!" Then the boy wept bitterly,

so great was his sorrow and detestation of sin. He was pure and chaste in all his words; he kept the sixth Commandment. **We are commanded by the sixth Commandment to be pure in all our words.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).* 2. a) **The sixth Commandment forbids all immodesty with ourselves or with others in words.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

But why is impure talk so wicked? Whoever uses bad talk always gives scandal; for he sows the devil's seed in men's hearts. God gave us the tongue, especially in order that we might adore Him. With the same tongue we receive the most sacred Body of the Lord in Holy Communion. Tell me yourselves, may one soil this consecrated tongue with the shameful filth of sin? St. Paul says: "Uncleanness let it not so much as be named among you, as becometh saints" (Eph. v, 3). Did you hear that? What then ought you to do, when your companions speak such wicked things in your presence? Aloysius gave that nobleman a severe reprimand—a young man to an old man! The old sinner must have felt not a little ashamed. You do the same, and say to such a dirty fellow right to his face: "Stop, and be ashamed of speaking like that under the eyes of God! If you talk like that again, I will not go with you any more."

c) As in thought and speech so also in his *entire conduct* Aloysius was *chaste* and pure. On the street he guarded his looks very carefully. He was afraid of seeing anything filthy and dishonorable. That was wise on his part; for often death comes into the heart through the eyes. Aloysius was chaste and pure in his looks. **We are commanded by the sixth Commandment to be pure and modest in all our looks.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

That is how every true child of God acts. But an impure and immodest child looks boldly at parts of its body, or the body of others, which one ought always to

keep covered. If it sees a bad picture in a show window, it stands and looks at that detestable picture and takes pleasure in it and laughs about it. But from behind that picture the devil grins with wicked joy over the harm that is being done to that child. Do you know why the devil rejoices?—That is how he catches souls. Of course, that immodest child does not think of that at all. God is displeased with such conduct. 2. b) **The sixth Commandment forbids all immodesty with ourselves or others in looks.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

d) You have also heard how modest little Aloysius was when dressing. He did not want even to see his bare feet, although, of course, that would not have been a sin at all. Yes, he also hated to have his servant see him half-clothed. That, of course, was not wrong or sinful. But that was how much the Saint detested everything impure or immodest. Really he was an angel in the flesh. Aloysius was pure and modest in dress and in all his actions. **We are commanded by the sixth Commandment to be pure and modest in dress and in all our actions.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

2. c) Have you, too, always been like him? A modest child is afraid of every impure sin. It never uncovers itself in an unbecoming manner before others; it never touches parts of its body, which ought to be always covered, solely for wicked pleasure. And even when alone a modest child never does what God may not see. Never does it allow other children to touch it in an immodest manner. There are devils in human form, who by their dress and actions, aim at robbing the innocence of children. But a good child never lets anyone place his hands upon its body in an unbecoming way. It thinks as did the chaste Susanna: "I would rather die innocent, than commit sin in the sight of the Lord!" Our Catechism says: **The sixth Commandment forbids all immodesty with ourselves**

or with others in dress and actions. *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

But many children are scrupulous. They look upon natural things—like "going to the closet," washing, bathing—as sins. Remember what I say: *Everything that is necessary for the proper care of the body, that it may remain clean and healthy, is allowed, and is not a sin; everything that is done for wicked pleasure is forbidden and is a sin.* That is the golden rule of life. Never forget it! Many a time it will be for you a Guardian Angel—What then does God forbid by the sixth Commandment? **The sixth Commandment forbids all immodesty with ourselves or others in looks, dress, words, or actions.** *(Repeat together).*

2. d) God gave the sixth Commandment in the first place for married people. He wants husband and wife to remain faithful to each other until death. He forbids them to do anything impure. If, therefore, a married man or a married woman committed impure sins with others, he or she would be guilty of breaking the sixth Commandment of God. Such a man or such a woman would be guilty of the sin called *"adultery."* This sin, adultery, is far more grievous than other sins of impurity; for it contains besides the vile sin of impurity also the sin against the solemn promise, which husband and wife have made to each other in the sight of God on their wedding-day. Consequently remember, that adultery refers only to *married* persons. Other sins against the sixth Commandment are called sins of impurity or immodesty, as I have already explained to you. Our Catechism says: **The sixth Commandment forbids all unchaste freedom with another's wife or husband.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

3. God forbids not only all sins of immodesty or impurity, but also everything that *endangers purity.* —Aloysius was for a time page at the royal court. There oftentimes *shows and theatricals* were held. But in the theatre one can sometimes see and hear things,

which are dangerous to innocence. Therefore Aloysius did not want to be present; for he did not want to endanger his innocence. Yes, even while *playing* he was always careful. I told you, that once he was asked to play with two little princesses; but he ran away. He might have done that without sin. But it is not proper or becoming, that boys and girls should play together. Even though it is not sinful, still it is possible that sin might happen at such play. Boys belong with boys and girls belong with girls. Much less was Aloysius willing to dance with girls. Who would want to blame him for that? *Dancing* is not indeed always sinful, but it is a dangerous occasion of sin. The holy Doctor of the Church, St. Ephraem, once said: "Where there is zither playing and dancing, there the angels mourn and the devil celebrates his feast." What does he mean? The angels mourn, because at dances many lose their innocence; the devil rejoices, because he catches many immortal souls on the dance-floor. St. Ambrose once said very rightly: "A young lady, who loves dancing, does not love purity."

There are other dangers to purity: *overeating and overdrinking,* in general *a soft and easy-going life.* If I pour oil into the fire, it flares up brightly. And if one eats or drinks too much, or leads a soft and easy-going life, one lights the impure fires in his heart. St. Aloysius, therefore, was strict with his body. Twice every week he kept a strict fast; on those occasions he ate nothing but three little pieces of bread, which he dipped into water. For sleeping he did not have a soft and warm bed, even in the cold winter. All that was well done. For a child, that cannot deny itself anything and wants to have and enjoy everything, will very soon fall into impurities.

Neither did Aloysius ever want to be idle; for doing nothing is a great danger to sin. "*Idleness* is the mother of all vices." Do you know the meaning of that old proverb?—If a person does nothing, neither will the devil have to do anything; for such a person

throws himself into the arms of the devil.—A great danger to purity are especially *bad books and newspapers.* What one may read in such writings is real poison; and if that poison enters into the heart, the hellish weeds of impurity will thrive and flourish in rank abundance. **The sixth Commandment does forbid the reading of bad and immodest books and newspapers.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

Write on the blackboard:

1. "Thou shalt not commit adultery!"
2. Duties—to be pure in thought, words, looks, actions.
3. Sins—immodesty with ourselves or others in words, looks, dress, actions; unchaste freedom with another's wife or husband; reading of bad books and newspapers.

Synthesis. St. Aloysius is a splendid example or model for you. He admonishes you: Love and preserve purity!—What is the sixth Commandment? How must we keep our thoughts? What are the other duties commanded by this Commandment? What are the sins against the sixth Commandment? What do you call sins of impurity committed by married people? What are some of the dangers to purity? *(Have the pupils read the answers from the Catechism. Assign the lesson for the next class).*

Application. Now I must place a few serious questions of conscience before you. Just imagine, that not I, but God Himself, is standing before you, and you must answer Him every question. You know that from God you cannot hide a single thing; for He sees through your heart and His eyes are like the lightning. Are you pure in God's sight?

1. *Are all your thoughts pure?* Or do you take pleasure in immodest thoughts? at least sometimes? If your parents or teachers knew all that you think

about, would you not have to be ashamed? Are all your thoughts so pure, that Jesus can love you and delight to come to you in Holy Communion? The Blessed Saviour has said: "Blessed are the clean of heart!" Can He say that of you too? The unclean of heart will never see God.

2. *How are your conversations?* Much wickedness is spoken, vulgar and filthy words, which one ought never to hear from the mouth of a Christian: words, that cause bitter pain and sorrow to the heart of God. Have you never spoken such words? Or do you perhaps like to listen to such talk? A true child of God turns away with detestation, when it hears such talk, and walks away. Do you, too, act like that? Always? Dear children, never carry on such talk, otherwise—I must say it to you again—our dear Lord will never say to you: "Blessed are you!" For you have not a pure heart. From a filthy heart come filthy words.

3. *And how is your conduct?* Are you modest in your looks? Are you always pure, when you are alone? Are you modest with others? Do you never do things, that God has forbidden most strictly? God has threatened, saying: "The impure shall not possess the kingdom of Heaven" (I Cor. vi, 9). When God says anything, He means it.

4. If now I could uncover all, that you have already thought and spoken and done, would you not have reason to fear? Would you not feel ashamed? If ever you did anything impure or immodest in the past, Oh! never do it again. Beg the merciful God to forgive your sinful conduct: "O my God! have mercy on me, never will I sin again. I will watch and pray, that I may not fall into temptation. O, Mary, Virgin Mother! be also my Mother. To Thee I consecrate my body and soul; accept me as Thy child! Protect me in all my temptations, so that I may preserve my heart pure for time and for eternity!"

(II) The Safeguards to Purity.

Catechetical Unit:

1) Why must we most carefully guard against impurity?

2) Why is this sin so shameful?

3) Is every sin of impurity a grievous sin?

4) What means should we employ in order to preserve our innocence?

(N. B. This supplementary lesson, which treats of the evil consequences, the malice of sins of impurity, and the safeguards to purity, is based on *"A Full Catechism of the Catholic Religion"* by Rev. Joseph Deharbe, S. J.; Revised, Enlarged and Edited by the Rt. Rev. Bishop P. N. Lynch, D. D., p. 197, Schwartz, Kirwin & Fauss, N. Y.).

Preparation. Dear children, let us begin our lesson today with the beautiful prayer: "Hail! holy Queen, Mother of mercy." Once I saw a picture, which I have never forgotten. It represented Mary, the Queen of Virgins, that is, of all pure and innocent souls. She occupied the center of this picture. She was seated upon a throne; on her head was a lovely crown, the sign that she was a Queen. In her arms she held the Child Jesus, Who was distributing four lilies to four Saints. The lily is the symbol, or the picture, of innocence of heart, that virtue, that makes a soul especially dear to the Saviour and His purest Mother. To the right of the throne were the figures of the protectors of innocent youth, St. Aloysius and St. John Berchmans; to the left of the throne were the two virgins, St. Cecilia and St. Agnes. Immediately in front of the four Saints were four little children, who were stretching out their hands to the Infant Jesus. The Saints told them to do that. For these little children, too, wanted to receive the lily of purity. They desired and prayed for this holy virtue. O! how beautiful must not this virtue be, since it makes a soul to be a favorite of Jesus and Mary. Holy Scripture says: "O! how beautiful is the chaste generation with glory; for the

memory thereof is known both with God and with men. It triumpheth crowned forever, winning the reward of undefiled conflicts" (Wisdom iv, 1s). Would you not like to belong to those happy ones, who enjoy the special protection of Jesus and Mary? Today I am going to show you how you can become the favorite children of God. But first let us review what we learned in the last class. *(Question the pupils briefly on the foregoing leson).*

That was a beautiful story, that I told you in the last class about St. Aloysius. He is our model. Let us look at him again today.

Aim. He will teach you: *how to preserve pour innocence.* But first we shall think of *the awful consequences of this sin of impurity,* so that you may be moved to make use of all the means at your disposal, in order to preserve this virtue of chastity in your hearts.

Presentation and Explanation.

1. a) Aloysius was like a lily among thorns. He was as much afraid of impurity as he was of the evil himself. I am not surprised at that at all. For impurity is really a most shameful sin. Yes, **there is no more shameful sin that impurity.** *(Have the pupils repeat the answer together; use the blackboard).*— When the morning sun shines into the little dewdrops, we can see some of the glory and splendor of the sun, for the sun's beauty is reflected in that dewdrop. So too, some of God's glory and beauty is in our soul; for the soul is the image and likeness of God. Now what does an impure person do? He soils the image of God with detestable filth. Is not that shameful? Many people commit such sins, but in some out of the way corner, or in the darkness of the night. And why? Because this sin is a disgrace before God and man. How must a person feel ashamed, if that sin becomes known! And what shame and confusion will not a person feel, when everything will be revealed on the last day, and when

God's flaming eye shall look through the sinner's heart! Many a person even conceals his impure sins in confession, and commits a sacrilege. Why? He dares not tell those sins, because he is ashamed to death.

b) But Aloysius, too, knew how shameful and pernicious that sin is. Indeed, **no sin is attended with more dreadful consequences that the sin of impurity.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*—Do you know why?—Many a person commits such sins, and thus sows the seed of death in his *body.* Such a person becomes sick and miserable and perishes. Then the worms eat up that young body, which he has so often desecrated. And his *soul?*—how does that look? The heart of an impure man is like an abominable pool, where horrible vermin and creeping things thrive. It is filled with bad thoughts and desires, and in them the sinner delights to grovel as a pig in the filth of the pig-stye. That is the reason, why this sin is called "uncleanness." 2. a) Remember, then, **that impurity robs a man of his innocence and infects his body and soul.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

2. b) But an impure person does not only remain impure. Other and more serious evils follow. **Impurity leads to many other sins and vices.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).* A person addicted to impurity no longer likes to pray. He confesses insincerely and without contrition, and thus becomes guilty of sacrilege. He also seduces others to all sorts of uncleanness. He becomes saucy toward his parents. He begins to steal and to lie. In the end, too, oftentimes such a person loses the Faith; for he says: "If only there were no God and no Heaven and no Hell!" And what one wants, that one likes to believe too. Thus matters continually go from bad to worse with an impure person. **Impurity plunges the sinner into misery and shame.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).* Such a person takes no pleasure in life any more and be-

comes a burden to himself. And the end? Many such persons have already committed suicide. And even though a person does not go as far as that, how easily can he not cast his poor soul into the eternal death of Hell! For that is the saddest of all: an impure person is chained by his sins as with iron bonds, and cannot free himself any more; even though he confesses it, often it is merely false contrition and penance.—There you see now the entire malice of sins of impurity. **1. Impurity robs man of his innocence, and infects the body and soul; 2. It leads him to many other sins and vices, and often to murder and despair; and 3. It plunges him into misery, ignominy, and shame, and finally into eternal damnation.** *(Repeat together;).* "The impure shall have their portion in the pool burning with fire and brimstone" (Apoc. xxi, 8). Not even Hell-fire itself will be able to burn out such sins.

3. From these dreadful consequences of impurity you can easily see, that such sins must be grievous in God's sight. Yes, **every sin of impurity, which one commits knowingly and willingly, either by himself or with others, is a mortal sin.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).* St. Paul says: "Know ye this and understand, that no fornicator, no unclean person, hath inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God" (Eph. v, 5). Never forget, therefore, that sins against the sixth Commandment are always mortal sins, *when they are committed quite willingly and for bad pleasure.* Why? Because the Lord abhors such acts. But if a person does such things merely out of curiosity, or thoughtlessness, or sensitiveness, it is not a great sin, but only a venial sin. But, you know this sin also offends God. God will not love a child so much, who lightly commits venial sins, and will no longer give him so many presents of grace. And so a child who makes light of venial sins will easily fall into mortal sin. A mortal sin is that which is done out of wicked pleasure-seeking. Oh! one can commit awful sins against modesty and purity. Woe to the child that dies

in mortal sin! He will go to Hell. None of you want to go to Hell. Therefore you should be modest and pure.

4. a) But if this sin is so pernicious and has such dreadful consequences, surely you must do all that is in your power to preserve your young hearts from this shameful filth. There are some very sure *safeguards* to purity. Just look at Aloysius! What did he do? He always and everywhere avoided the dangers to purity; he never was to be found in bad, wicked company. That is above all things most necessary: **to flee all bad company and occasions of sin.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).* Where wicked and corrupt companions make use of impure and immodest conversation, that is no company for you. Say at once openly: "I do not want to hear of such things. If you do not stop, I will tell on you!" Every thing else is useless, if a person does not avoid the occasion of sin. God Himself warns us: "He that loveth danger shall perish in it" (Ecclesiasticus iii, 27). And you all know that a rotten apple corrupts a whole dozen of good and sound ones. One wicked companion can seduce a dozen good ones. Did you ever watch a moth or a miller? It flies and dances about the light, until its wings burn, and then it dies miserably. Many a child does the very same thing. A person knows very well, that here or there is a danger of sin; but that person continues to go there, in spite of all, until he perishes miserably; until he loses his innocence.

b) A second safeguard to purity is this: **to often receive the Holy Sacraments.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).* St. Aloysius went to confession and Holy Communion every week. Thus he remained as pure as an angel. Holy Communion puts out the fire of impurity in our hearts, and gives us again and again new heavenly strength for the battle. A certain holy priest (Don Bosco) says: "To confess only once every three months is for young people as little as a drop of water upon a red-hot iron." "You ought not to wait longer

than a month, you who love your innocence," says St. Francis of Sales. But the best thing to do is to ask your confessor for advice, especially when you get a little older; but then do what your confessor tells you! In general that is your rule, whenever you are in doubt about this sin: *One ought to ask one's confessor for advice.* But suppose, that you cannot ask him at once, what ought you to do in the meantime?—*Meanwhile one ought to avoid doing this or that about which one doubts, until one can get the proper advice from the confessor.*

c) St. Aloysius had also a third safeguard.—Oftentimes he would pray for hours before the Tabernacle. Already as a boy of nine years he dedicated himself to the dear Mother of God. Never for a single day did he forget to pray for her motherly protection. And Mary protected him as her child in all his dangers. Why did Aloysius pray so much? To be pure one needs strength, and consequently that means—pray! St. Augustine was in the beginning a great sinner. After his conversion he confessed: "I thought, that I could lead a pure life by my own strength; but soon I felt that I was too weak. Then I began to pray:" Remember, therefore, that **in temptation we must recommend ourselves to God and to the Blessed Virgin.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

Temptation comes upon all men. Abominable things continually keep entering into your mind. Wicked companions want to seduce you. The bad desire to do impure things begins to stir in your heart. In such temptations *pray,* particularly make use of ejaculatory prayers: "Lord, help me, or I perish!" "O my God, rather let me die than sin!" "O Mary, help me, do not desert me!" Generally the sign of the cross will be enough to drive away the temptation. If a bad thought enters your mind—make the sign of the cross on your forehead. If you hear bad talk—a cross upon your lips! If the desire to impurity stirs within you—a cross

upon your heart! The cross is the sword for all Christians in temptation.

d) Finally there is also a fourth safeguard. Aloysius always lived under the eyes of God. He always thought of this: "God knows what I am doing, God sees me!" And in the end he could not think of anything else except of God. Therefore, I can easily believe, that Aloysius lived a pure and innocent life, as though he were already in Heaven. Walking in the presence of God is like a Guardian Angel for holy purity. But at the same time the Saint often thought of his *death.* Yes, if one thinks of dying and of what follows upon death, one will not want to have anything to do with impure pleasure. You, too, ought to do what Aloysius did: **You ought to remember that God sees everything and that you may die at any moment.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

Write on the blackboard:

1. Wickedness of impurity:
   a) no sin more shameful;
   b) no sin has such dreadful consequences.

2. Consequences of impurity:
   a) it robs man of his innocence, and infects his body and soul;
   b) it leads to many other sins and vices;
   c) it plunges man into misery, shame, eternal damnation.

3. Impurity always mortal sin—if committed willingly and for wicked pleasure. Otherwise venial sin.

4. Safeguards to purity:
   a) shun bad company and occasions of sin;
   b) often receive the Sacraments;
   c) recommend yourself to God and Mary;
   d) think of God's presence and of death.

Synthesis. What a beautiful life St. Aloysius lived! How lovely purity made him in soul and body! The sin of impurity is most wicked. Why? What are some of the consequences of this sin? What kind of a sin is impurity? Is it always mortal? When is it venial only? What are some of the safeguards to purity? What ought you to do, when you doubt about certain things in regard to holy purity? *(Have the pupils read the answers from the blackboard. Assign the lesson for the next class.).*

Application. 1. The vice of impurity is most hateful to God, and the one sin that He punishes with the most terrible chastisements even in this world. The valley of the Jordan that lies among the mountains of Palestine, was once one of the most fertile and beautiful places on earth. In this valley were two cities, called Sodom and Gomorrah, which were likewise rich and magnificent among the great cities of the East. But the more prosperous these cities became the more wicked did they grow to be. The very riches in which the people lived plunged them into a state of sinful idleness. And from this vice the still more terrible sin of impurity arose; so that the anger of God Almighty was raised against them, and He resolved to destroy them together with all their sinful inhabitants.

In these cities there was only one family that feared the Lord God, and kept away from the horrible sin of impurity. It was the family of Lot. God sent an angel from Heaven to take that family out of the doomed cities before He would destroy them. Then the punishment descended upon those cities. "The sun was risen upon the earth, and the Lord rained down upon Sodom and Gomorrah brimstone and fire from out of Heaven. And He destroyed these cities and all the country round about, and all the inhabitants of these cities, and the things that spring from the earth. And Abraham, rising in the morning, looked towards Sodom and Gomorrah and the whole land of that coun-

try, and he saw the ashes arise up from the earth as the smoke of a furnace." Thus does the Holy Scripture narrate the terrible punishment (Gen. xix, 23s.)

What an awful end did not these two impure cities receive for their wickedness! At the present time the place where they formerly were, is marked by the Dead Sea, which is the eternal monument of the curse with which God visits this terrible vice.

It is said, that on the banks of the Dead Sea there grows a kind of fruit, which is the true image or picture of this awful sin. This fruit has the appearance of an apple. Outwardly it is of a brilliant and attractive color, but when it is plucked and opened, the interior is found to be rotten, and if eaten, it leaves an exceedingly bitter taste. Such, too, is the vice of impurity. Outwardly it appears pleasant, but when it is indulged in the soul is filled with bitterness and remorse, and is struck dead by its poison.

2. A certain young man, who had often yielded to temptations against holy innocence because he did not run away from temptations, once asked a holy man to tell him what he ought to do, so that he might never again fall into impurity. This man of God replied: "There are three things you must do, if you really desire to overcome these temptations. First, you must *fly away;* secondly, you must fly *at once;* thirdly, you must fly *away quickly!*" The young man followed the advice of this Saint. As soon as he felt the temptation coming upon him, he went away from the person, or the place, or the dangerous occasion. And the result was victory. So, dear children, keep away from the danger—flee the occasion at once and quickly, and you will never fall into sin.

3. The Blessed Virgin once said to St. Bridget: "As a mother who sees her child in danger of being put to death by an enemy, runs forward and does all in her power to save that child, so do I also run to help my children, even those among them, who have already

yielded to impure temptations, just as soon as they call upon Me for help!" Let us, then, dear children, turn to Mary every morning and every night of our lives. But especially in time of temptation let us cry out: " O my Queen, my Mother, remember that I am Thine own. Keep me and guard me as Thy property and possession!"

At the dawn of every new morning let us dedicate ourselves to our dear Mother, and before retiring at the end of the day let us say with all our heart: "O my Queen, my Mother! I consecrate myself wholly to Thee, and as a proof of my surrender, I consecrate to Thee my eyes, my ears, my mouth, my heart, and myself whole and entire. As I am Thine, O good Mother, do keep and guard me as Thy property and possession. Amen." *(Have the children learn this and the preceding prayer by heart).*

LESSON XXIV.

The Property of Another—Restitution.

Catechetical Unit:

1) What is the seventh Commandment? L. XXXIV, Q. 373.

2) What is forbidden by the seventh Commandment? L. XXXIV, Q. 375.

3) What are we commanded by the seventh Commandment? L. XXXIV, Q. 374.

4) Are we bound to restore ill-gotten goods? L. XXXIV, Q. 376.

5) Are we obliged to repair the damage we have unjustly caused? L. XXXIV, Q. 377.

Preparation. Dear children, when Queen Blanche became the mother of St. Louis, who later on was King of France, she received him from God as a treasure to

be guarded with the utmost care. From his earliest youth she kept one thought before his mind—to love God above all things, and never to offend Him by sin. Often when the little boy was playing at her side, or sitting on her knee, she would say to him: "My own dear child, God knows how much I love you; no mother could ever love her son more than I love you. And yet, I would sooner see you lying dead at my feet than to know that you had offended God by a mortal sin." I too, would like to speak to you in the same way, dear children; for I love you all from the bottom of my heart. And yet, I would rather see you dead than know that you would later on offend God by serious sin, especially against holy purity. Guard that most precious jewel, that heavenly pearl of great price, the angelic virtue. Let us review the lesson on the safeguards to holy purity. *(Question the pupils briefly on the preceding lesson).*—In the fifth Commandment God says: "Thou shalt not kill!" Thereby God takes life under His protection. What do you need for life? —Food and drink, shelter and clothing, these are what you need for life. Your parents take care of those things; the good Lord has imposed that duty upon them. Now if your mother gives you a piece of bread, to whom does it belong?—It is your property, is it not? From whom has your mother received the bread?—Your mother bought it from the baker. From whom did your mother get the money?—Your father earned it. You see, therefore, what a person receives as a present, or what he buys, or what he earns, is his property. May a person simply take away from another what belongs to him? No; for the Lord God Himself says expressly: "Thou shalt not steal!" Let us say this Commandment together: **The seventh Commandment is: Thou shalt not steal.** *(Use the blackboard; see the diagram below just above the synthesis).* There is, therefore, a mine and a thine, and you may not injure another in his property or possessions.

Aim. We shall learn about that today: *it is forbidden to take unjustly from another what belongs to him. But whoever has another's property must restore it to him.*

Presentation. Several years ago a certain official went to confession. This man was a millionaire. But he had not acquired that immense sum of money in an honorable manner. He had amassed nearly his entire fortune by thefts from the public treasury. No one had any suspicions of that. However, the sinner had no peaceful hours any longer. That sinful money burned his soul like the fires of hell. Finally he resolved to satisfy for all, and went to confession. "I have no peace any more in my conscience," he said to the confessor; "I would like to get rid of my sins and find my peace of heart again." Then the priest said to him: "My son, first go home and examine and count carefully how much unjust money you have taken; then come again! For unless every unjust penny is returned, there is no forgiveness, either in this life or in the next."

With heavy heart the man went home and began to reckon. It took many days. Finally the work was finished. Early the next morning he went to the priest and confessed his guilt with contrite heart. But he wanted to show that he was in earnest and really desired to become a different man. Therefore he handed over to the priest the immense sum of five and one half millions of dollars, which he had acquired in a sinful, unjust manner. "Father," he said, "take this money, for it is all the property of another. I have stolen it from the state treasury. Restore it to the state treasury, so that it may be used for the welfare of the country." The priest took the money and did as the penitent had instructed him to do. The rich man became practically a beggar. But in return he received what was worth more than all money—absolution from the guilt of his sins, and the peace of God in his heart.

Explanation. 1. a) This man was a millionaire thief. How did he get that money?—He took it secretly from the state treasury; no one knew anything about it. To take away something from another secretly and without his consent, or against his will, is to commit theft or *to steal.* Theft is a sin; for God has given the seventh Commandment for all: "Thou shalt not steal!" A little theft is a venial sin, but at the same time a great disgrace. A big theft (which would amount to a day's wages or more) is a mortal sin, and at the same time a great piece of foolishness. And why?—See, that man became rich in money, but a beggar in his soul. While he was stealing the money, the devil stole his soul. The property of another would have drawn his soul down into Hell. What then would he have had from all his millions? How foolish it is to steal!

b) Of course, much more wicked than stealing is *robbery.* That, too, belongs to the seventh Commandment. A robber does not take away what belongs to another by secret means, but openly and with force or violence. Just think of Job! Robbers had fallen upon his herds and had driven them away. Christ tells us of a man that fell among the robbers. What did they do to him?—If a person, while committing the robbery, goes so far as to kill another, he is guilty of a double sin. Such a sin cries to Heaven for vengeance.

c) Really I am curious to know how that thief happened to gather such a great sum of money. The man was an official and had to administer the state treasury. When a sum of money was paid in, he would write false figures in the books. For instance, a person paid $2,000.00. That official thought to himself: "Hold! I will write $200.00. In order that nothing might become known of this sinful practice, he would simply forge the papers and the books. Thus gradually he became rich. Therefore the man did not only steal, but he also *cheated.* He imposed upon others in his dealings with them; he was crooked in his dealings with his neigh-

bors. That is cheating. (Here are some examples of cheating.—A milkman waters the milk; a butcher sells bad meat; a storekeeper uses false weights and measures; a dealer lies to his customers, saying: "This horse is a first class animal. It is as gentle as a lamb, a child can drive it in safety." Another person has a bill for one hundred dollars; he changes it to read one thousand dollars. Another person is hired as an employee; but he does not work conscientiously; he prefers to waste away his time. Another person is a swindler. He says: "I am in dire need, my children are suffering hunger." To make debts in a careless manner; to refuse to pay one's just debts; to refuse to restore borrowed money; to neglect to pay one's lawful taxes; to go bankrupt, especially when thereby poor people become the sufferers).

d) But how did that rich official become a thief and a cheat?—The poor sinner was plainly possessed by the devil of money. The money bag was his false god, his idol, and he adored that zealously. Such people do not merely steal and cheat, they oftentimes also commit *usury*. Here is a father, that gets into hard luck. His children are sick, and, of course, to be sick costs money. He can no longer earn enough and has to contract debts. Then the usurer comes along and says: "I will give you money to loan, but I want you to pay me one per cent, interest a month." (How much does that make in a year?)—That is usury. But what will the poor man do? With heavy heart he agrees. After a half year the creditor returns and demands his money back. The poor father cannot pay and begs as did the servant in the Gospel: "Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all!" However the man has a heart as hard as a stone. He orders the house and all the property of his debtor to be sold so, that the poor family is in danger of starving. That is usury. That man has asked unlawful interest for the money he has loaned (in New York State the legal rate of interest is six percent; but that man has demanded twelve percent).

He takes advantage of his neighbor's ignorance or need.—To be guilty of usury is a mortal sin, and an injustice that cries to Heaven for vengeance. The usurer acts like a spider. When a spider sees a fly, it spins its web about the fly, and then sucks the life out of it. The usurer is a heartless bloodsucker; but he sells his soul and his eternal life to the devil.—You see, therefore, **the seventh Commandment forbids all unjust taking or keeping what belongs to another.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

2. Frequently several help one another in committing a theft. I do not know whether the millionaire stole that money alone or whether he had helpers. Perhaps he got into financial difficulties. He went to a friend and asked him in confidence: "What should I do? I need the money. Give me some good advice!" His friend says: "That is an easy matter. There is much money in the state treasury. Take what you need; you know that you can forge the books!" This is devilish advice. That friend is also guilty of theft together with the official. But alone the man could not carry out the theft. Therefore a second friend helps him and gives him the key or the combination of the safe. To be sure, he does not do that for nothing; he, too, receives a share of the stolen money. Such a person is a helper of a thief and also commits a mortal sin. For *a person that gives advice or help* is no better than the thief.—A third friend accepts the stolen money and hides it, so that the theft might not be known. *A person that buys, or sells, or hides, or keeps stolen goods* is also guilty of theft. You see, therefore, that *not only those are guilty of robbery and theft, who are properly called robbers and thieves, but also all those who give them advice or assistance; who buy, sell, hide or keep stolen goods; who do not return the things they have found or borrowed, who do not pay their debts; and all those who beg without need, and thus defraud the real poor of their alms. (Repeat together).*

3. There is another way in which a person can sin against the seventh Commandment of God. Here are some children, who destroy their neighbor's property by their careless and malicious conduct. They walk through gardens or fields, that have just been planted and cause thereby a great deal of damage. They break down fences, or windows, or other things. They break down young trees or cut the young bark, so that the trees die. They knock down the fruit and then run away. They mark up or smear the walls of buildings with all sorts of wicked remarks. They take delight in killing their neighbor's animals for no reason whatsoever. They tear the clothing of their companions, or their own clothing. They carelessly break the slates or tear the books of their neighbor. They start fires next to their neighbor's barn, and soon the entire building is on fire, yes, perhaps several of the animals are destroyed. You see, then, that a person can also be guilty of breaking the seventh Commandment of God *by causing damage unjustly or through one's own fault.* That is just as bad as stealing.

4. That is not how a true child of God thinks and acts. A genuine Christian says to himself: "I would rather lose what belongs to me than to have even a single penny from another unjustly. I must respect the property of my neighbor. I will have nothing to do with what belongs to another. I will give to all men what rightfully belongs to them." That is what God expects of all true Christians. Our Catechism says: **By the seventh Commandment we are commanded to give to others what belongs to them and to respect their property.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

5. a) The millionaire of our story did not feel happy in spite of his money bag. That sinful money burned into his soul. Now he wanted to be reconciled again with God. He repented of his grievous injustice, and confessed it sincerely. However, that alone would not have helped him at all. St. Augustine once said:

"Sin will not be forgiven, unless the property which belongs to another is restored." Therefore what duty did the confessor impose upon his penitent?—That sinner was really in earnest with his conversion; therefore he gave back, he restored, the entire sum of money, that he had unjustly acquired, yes, even to the last penny. Of course, that must have been mighty hard for him; for the man became practically a beggar at one stroke. But the sacrifice was necessary. Here one may say in all truth: Your money or your life!—Just as this sinner acted, so must every person act, who has acquired another's property unjustly, or damaged the property of another unjustly. **We are bound to restore the ill-gotten goods and to repair the damage we have done; otherwise we cannot be forgiven.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

But let us suppose, that that millionaire had taken something else instead of money; for example, a piece of property or a house and lot. If he no longer had that property in his possession, would he still be obliged to restore it?—But he no longer has it in his possession?—He sold it already to another. In that case, he must give back the value of that property, or the equivalent in money or property, as far as he is able. Our Catechism says: **We are bound to restore ill-gotten goods, or the value of them, as far as we are able.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

b) Now that official might indeed have thought to himself: "To restore that money is dangerous. I might be discovered. I know what I will do: I will have a church built and the rest of the money I will gradually give away to the poor. Then God will be satisfied." What do you think of that?—"The property of another calls out for its owner!" That is, the property of another must be restored to its rightful owner. To be sure, a person is not obliged to betray himself; he can restore the ill-gotten goods through another person as our millionaire thief did. He had that taken care of by his confessor.—But now another doubt

comes into my mind. Suppose that man had stolen the money from a good friend; but meanwhile that friend has died. What is to be done?—The thief may not keep a single penny for himself; he must restore all to the rightful heirs, to the wife or the children, or the relatives of that man, whom he has robbed. But it is possible, that that dead friend has no relatives at all living. What then?—Even under those circumstances not a penny of the money belongs to him. He must use that stolen money for the poor, or for other good purposes, for example, for the Church, for an orphan asylum, or for the missions, etc.—Remember then, that *restitution must be made to the owner or to his heirs; but if that is impossible, the ill-gotten goods must be given to the poor or be appropriated to religious and charitable purposes. (Repeat together).*

c) But let us suppose, that the official of our story had no longer all the money, which he had acquired in an unjust manner. He perhaps had already used up a great deal of it. Is it enough for him to restore the part that remains to him?—That would be a grievous mistake. He must henceforth live as simply as possible, and deny himself wherever he can. He must, so to speak, try to save money wherever he can, and may not permit himself any unnecessary pleasures. In other words, *he must sincerely have the intention of making the restitution as soon as possible; and in the meanwhile he must employ all the means of performing this duty. (Repeat together).*

Now just one more question! Are the others who helped him in the stealing free from every obligation? —They, too, must restore everything. Yes, if the millionaire thief had not given the ill-gotten goods back, they would be held responsible for the theft. Do you see? That is how seriously and strictly God looks upon this matter. Now tell me yourselves: Is it not the greatest foolishness to steal even a single penny? Every penny that is ill-gotten must be restored, other-

wise it will at some future time burn into the soul.

Write on the blackboard:

1. "Thou shalt not steal!"
2. Sins—unjust taking or keeping another's property (by theft, robbery, cheating, usury, damages).
3. Duties— to respect another's property; to give to all what is theirs.
4. Without restitution—no forgiveness.

Synthesis. God is the Supreme Lord of all things: "All is Thine!" God has given us men His property only as a loan. He Himself is and remains the Owner and Protector. Therefore He commands: "Thou shalt not steal!" What does God forbid by the seventh Commandment? What is the difference between stealing and robbery? What is cheating? How can we damage the property of our neighbor? Is that also forbidden by this Commandment? What must one do, who is guilty of breaking this Commandment? To whom must he return the ill-gotten goods? How much must he return? What if he is unable to restore it at once? What does the seventh Commandment command? *(Have the pupils read the answers from the Catechism. Assign the lesson for the next class).*

Application. 1. Stealing and cheating—what disgraceful sins! But to be honest and just—how beautiful! Just think of the pious Tobias. Once his wife received a young goat as a present and took it home. Old, blind Tobias heard it bleating. He got terribly frightened, and said at once: "Take heed, lest perhaps it be stolen; Give it back to its owner! For it is not lawful for us either to eat or to touch anything that cometh by theft" (Tobias ii, 21).—Are you, too, so honest to the smallest details? How about pilfering little things? That is also a sin of theft. It is, indeed, only a venial sin, but a wicked sin of children. At first only a little thief, than a great thief. That has

often been the case. And a child, that cannot deny itself anything, will gradually become a slave of its wicked inclinations. When you are again tempted to pilfer, or take little things on the sly, go away at once, and make the sign of the cross on your mouth, and look up to Jesus on the Cross! Like a consuming fire thirst tormented Him and no one gave Him a drink of cool water. Also think of how you some day will have to suffer in Purgatory for your pilfering!

2. It is also a sin to damage the property of another. Have you perhaps also in the past injured fields or gardens? Have you cut down young trees? Have you marked walls with chalk or pencils? Have you returned the things that you have found? Have you injured the clothing or property of your companions? What must one do, when one has injured the property of another?

3. Now lay your hand upon your heart! Can you sincerely say in God's presence: "I have not a single dishonest penny?" Have you nothing at all to satisfy for? If you have, do it at once! With ill-gotten goods it is just the same as when one has gotten something into one's eye: it tortures one, until that thing is removed from the eye; or the eye becomes inflamed with burning pain, and perhaps in the end the eye must even perish. In the same way all ill-gotten goods weigh heavily upon one's conscience. The money or the property must be restored, or there will be no peace; it will burn into one's conscience, or some day the soul will burn in Purgatory, until the last penny is paid; or if the injustice is great, the soul will burn in the fires of Hell, where it will no longer be possible to satisfy for the sin and to pay back the debt. You must not think, that God will do away with His Commandment just to please you.

4. Consequently be honest even in little things! For with little things one begins and with great things one ends. But remember well: Ill-gotten goods do not thrive. As they are gained, so they also disappear.

The dishonest penny will consume the dishonest dollar. Guard your hands against the property of another, otherwise matters may end badly with you! Jesus has said: "What doth it profit a man, if he gain the whole world, and suffer the loss of his own soul?" (Matt. xvi, 26). Your soul is worth more than all the money and the property of the whole world.

LESSON XXV.

Lying.

Catechetical Unit:

1) What is the eighth Commandment? L. XXXIV, Q. 378.

2) What is forbidden by the eighth Commandment? L. XXXIV, Q. 380 (in part).

3) What are we commanded by the eighth Commandment? L. XXXIV, Q. 379 (in part).

Preparation. Dear children, our Bible History tells us of a certain king of Israel, named Achab, who had a palace at Jezrahel. Near it was a vineyard owned by a man named Naboth. Achab desired to possess that vineyard, so that he might turn it into a garden for himself; but the law of Moses forbade a son to sell the property, which he had inherited from his forefathers. The king was so troubled because he could not have the vineyard, that he could neither eat nor sleep. His wife, queen Jezabel, said: "Be of good cheer: I will give thee the vineyard of Naboth." She then wrote letters in the king's name to the chief men of the city, men whom she knew to be wicked like herself, requesting them to find some men, who would wrongfully accuse Naboth. These men bore false witness against Naboth, saying that he blasphemed God and the king. On their testimony Naboth was condemned, taken out of the city, and stoned to death. Then Achab took the

vineyard of Naboth. Three months later Achab was mortally wounded in battle; and when the chariot in which he received the fatal wound was being washed after his death, the dogs came and licked up the blood. Shortly after Jezabel was cast out of the window of her palace, and the walls were sprinkled with her blood. The hoofs of the horses trod on her, and the dogs came and ate her flesh. Thus does the Lord punish, even in this life, sins against the seventh Commandment. Let us review the lesson on the seventh Commandment. *(Question the pupils briefly on the foregoing lesson).* —God is eternal Truth. We children of men are God's image and likeness. Therefore we ought to hold to the truth always. For that reason we have a special Commandment, the eighth. Let us say it together: **The eighth Commandment is: Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.** *(Use the blackboard; see the diagram below just above the synthesis).* The very wording of this Commandment tells us what God forbids in this regard.—*The eighth Commandment forbids above all to give false evidence; that is, to say in a court of justice what is not true. (Repeat together).* We have learned about that in a previous lesson on the second Commandment. What is such a lie called, that is taken under oath?—Why is perjury such a great sin?—But God not merely forbids false testimony, but He forbids every untruth. And yet, how many speak the untruth! Have you, too, not done that already? Lying is precisely a pet sin with many children.

Aim. I am now going to show you: *how hateful lying is and how God detests this sin.*

Presentation. The early Christians were all of one heart and mind. No one called what he owned his own property, but all held things in common. There were no needy persons among them. For whoever possessed a house or a field, sold his property, brought the money of that sale and laid it at the feet of the Apostles. From this common property every one received according to his needs.

A man, named Ananias, sold his field. But he kept back some of the money he had received from the sale of the land. His wife, Saphira, knew about it too. Then Peter asked him very earnestly: "Ananias, why hath Satan tempted thy heart, that thou shouldst lie to the Holy Ghost, and by fraud keep part of the price of the land? Whilst it remained, did it not remain to thee? And after it was sold, was it not in thy power? Why hast thou conceived this thing in thy heart? Thou hast not lied to men, but to God" (Acts of Ap. v, 3s). At these words Ananias fell down and gave up the ghost. And there came great fear upon all that heard of it. The young men came, removed the corpse and buried it.

After about three hours Saphira, too, came. She did not know anything of what had happened. Peter said to her: "Tell me, woman, whether you sold the land for so much?" Saphira assured him, saying: "Yes, for so much." Peter answered: "Why have you agreed together to tempt the Spirit of the Lord? Behold the feet of them who have carried thy husband are at the door, and they shall carry thee out." Suddenly Saphira fell down before his feet and gave up the ghost. The men entered, carried out her corpse and buried it beside her husband. Great fear came upon the whole Church and upon all, that heard these things.

Explanation. 1. How do you like the conduct of these two Christians?—Peter asked Ananias upon his honor: "Didst thou give all to me?" What did he reply?—Then the Apostle also asked Saphira: "Did you sell the land for so much?" She, too, said: "Yes, for so much." Therefore both of them told the untruth, and lied most shamefully.—But many a one tells the untruth, and still it is not a lie. Just suppose, that Ananias had sold the land for $500. But to his wife he says: "I received only $300 for it." Saphira is asked and gives the sum of $300. Would that be a lie?—No; for to make a mistake is not the same as to tell a lie.

But did Ananias and Saphira merely make a mistake? —Both of them knew exactly how much money they had received for the field. Therefore they told the untruth *knowingly.* Yes, they even agreed with each other saying: "We will not tell the whole sum and we will not give up all the money." Therefore they *deliberately* and wilfully told the untruth, in order to deceive St. Peter. They told a lie.—*A lie is to say knowingly and deliberately what is not true. (Repeat together).* God forbids that by the eighth Commandment. 2. **The eighth Commandment forbids all lies.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).* The Lord God, eternal Truth, detests all lies. He loves only the truth. Therefore He has given us the eighth Commandment. 3. **We are commanded by the eighth Commandment to speak the truth in all things.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

4. a) But not all lies are alike. Why did Ananias and Saphira speak the untruth?—They felt ashamed in Peter's presence, because they had retained a part of the money for themselves, and did not want to acknowledge their disgrace. In their difficulty and embarrassment they lied to the Apostle. They told the untruth for their own benefit, to get out of a difficulty. This kind of lie is called an *officious lie. (Write on the blackboard).* Such lies are very common. A child must remain in school after the other pupils are dismissed. It fears its father and mother, and to get out of the difficulty it tells a lie.—On another occasion it misses Mass on a Sunday through its own fault. In school that child lies to get out of the difficulty, saying: "I was sick." All such lies are sinful. If a person could save his life by a lie, he would not be allowed to tell it. However, in times of very great need, it is permitted to make use of an evasive or an ambiguous answer, that is, an answer that admits of two meanings.

(Let me explain a little more in detail what I mean. Once St. Athanasius was forced to flee from his enemies. He entered into a boat and rowed up the

Nile River. Suddenly he ordered that the boat be turned about and rowed towards his pursuers. These men did not recognize him. The captain asked him: "Have you not seen Athanasius?" Very quietly the Saint answered: "He is not very far from here. He rowed up the river scarcely an hour ago. Hurry, and you can overtake him!" His persecutors hastened away, and Athanasius was saved.—Did the Saint tell the untruth? No, he gave an ambiguous answer, an answer that has two meanings, but it was not a lie).

b) Another kind of lie many people do not consider a sin at all. Here is a person, who says to one of his companions: "You should go to the teacher at once; he must tell you something." But it is only a joke or a jest; he merely wants to play an "April fool's joke" upon his comrade. That is called a *jocose lie. (Write on the blackboard)*. But God does not take such a foolish joke; for a jocose lie, too, is a sin. Only when a person is able to recognize the joke at once, then it is not a sin. (In school you have often heard fables or fairy tales, for example about the fox and the grapes. Is it true what is narrated in those tales?—And yet, it is not a lie to tell such tales; for every child knows at once what that story means. This fable contains a grain of truth, a useful teaching for life).

c) But the worst kind of lie is the so-called *malicious lie. (Write on the blackboard)*. You yourselves tell me an example.—When the spies returned from the Promised Land, they told the following story to the Israelites: "The land floweth in very deed with milk and honey. But it hath very strong inhabitants, and the cities are great and walled. We saw there certain monsters of men of the giant kind, in comparison with whom we seemed like locusts" (Numbers xiii). That was an exaggeration and an untruth. What happened then? The sons of Israel murmured loudly against Moses and Aaron. The crowd shouted furiously and wanted to stone both of them to death. Such great injury can a malicious lie cause.

5. Ananias and Saphira did not merely lie most shamefully. They gave up only a part of the price that they had received. And yet, they pretended before Peter and the other Christians that they had given up all. Why? They simply wanted to appear better and more pious than they really were. What do you say of such conduct?—That was deceit, *hypocrisy. We sin by hypocrisy when we pretend to be better or more pious than we really are, in order thereby to deceive others. (Repeat together).* You see, then, hypocrisy is lying in conduct. The hypocrite speaks and acts differently from what he thinks. Who else acted like that? —Judas went to the Last Supper. He pretended to be a faithful disciple of Jesus and as innocent as a little child. And yet, he was as false as a serpent. The miserable hypocrite even kissed Jesus, as though he were his best friend.—God has genuine disgust for a hypocrite. Therefore it is written in Holy Scripture: "The Holy Spirit will flee from the deceitful" (Wisdom i, 5). Jesus Himself once said to the hypocritical Pharisees: "You are like to whitened sepulchres, which outwardly appear beautiful, but within are full of dead men's bones and of all filthiness" (Matt. xxiii, 27s). And a holy teacher of the church (Clement of Alexandria) says: "The hypocrite is like to a dunghill, which is covered with snow." Outwardly it is beautiful, but inwardly it is full of all sorts of filth.

6. How much God detests lying and hypocrisy you can see very plainly from the story of Ananias and Saphira. How sad was not their end! They fell to the earth and were dead. That was God's punishment. Tell me yourselves: Can lying be a mere trifle in God's eyes?—Of course, generally lying is only a venial sin. But who wants to go to Purgatory for that? Then usually, too, one does not stop merely at telling lies. Remember the proverb: A young liar, an old thief! Deceit follows upon lying. Do not lie, do not speak the untruth. God's punishment is severe! God loves the truth and detests all lies. Therefore He has given

us the eighth Commandment. *We are commanded by the eighth Commandment to speak the truth in all things. (Repeat together).*

Write on the blackboard:

1. "Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor!

2. Sins—all lies (officious, jocose, malicious), hypocrisy.

3. Duties—to speak the truth in all things.

Synthesis. What we have told you today is not much, but it is very important. A true Christian ought to be the image of God in his speech and in his conduct.—What is the eighth Commandment? What does the eighth Commandment forbid? How many kinds of lies are there? Which is the worst kind of lies? What do you call lies spoken under oath, especially in a court of justice? What do you mean by hypocrisy? What does God command by the eight Commandment? *(Have the pupils read the answers from the Catechism. Assign the lesson for the next class).*

Application. Who of you dares to say: "I have never told a lie?" There are children that tell the untruth every day. Yes, of many a one it is possible to say: "That child lies as often as it opens its mouth."

1. But *telling the untruth is a disgrace in the sight of God.* In the Word of God we read: "Lying lips are an abomination to the Lord" (Proverbs xii, 22). That means: God detests those that tell lies. Again we read: "A lie is a foul blot in a man" (Ecclesiasticus xxi, 26). Just represent to yourselves a First Communicant in a white dress: The child falls down and the beautiful Communion garment is soiled. How that poor child would cry! Thus lying is a hateful, dirty stain upon the soul.—Do you know whence a lie comes? Jesus Himself has told us: "The devil is a liar and the father thereof" (John viii, 44). Yes, the devil has invented lying; he lied most shamefully to our first parents.

Who are they, who like to lie? St. Augustine tells us that: "All they that lie are children of the devil." Lying comes from the devil and leads to the devil. Lying is a disgrace in God's eyes.

2. *Lying is also a disgrace before men.* How ashamed a person must feel, when he is caught in the act of lying! Then the poor sinner stands there and cannot say a single word any more. No one trusts an untruthful man. No one believes a person who has been caught in a lie, even though he may be telling the truth. While St. Francis of Sales was still a little boy, his mother often used to say to him: "Dear Francis, only do not speak the untruth! Lying makes one dishonorable before God and before one's own conscience. A lie is from the devil and by telling lies one becomes a child of the devil." What do you want to be, children of God or children of the devil? Then always stand by the truth! A sincere child has its heart upon its tongue. Never tell the untruth for any price! Rather bear a punishment ten times than tell a lie once. For God will at some time or other punish lying. If you are afraid of a scolding or a whipping, quickly make the sign of the cross over your mouth, and then speak the truth freely and sincerely, just as it is. Children, likewise never be deceitful! Always show yourselves just as you are! Everybody loves an open and sincere and honest child, but a false and deceitful child everyone despises.

3. But now let us beg the dear Lord's pardon; you all have good reason for that. "O, my God, Thou art eternal Truth! And I have so often told the untruth; pardon me my guilt! From now on I will never tell a lie! Give me Thy grace, so that I may not fall again. Amen!"

LESSON XXVI.

Sins Against Honor.

Catechetical Unit:

1) What is forbidden by the eighth Commandment? L. XXXIV, Q. 380 (in part).

2) What are we commanded by the eighth Commandment? L. XXXIV, Q. 379 (in part).

3) What must they do who have lied about their neighbor and seriously injured his character? L. XXXIV, Q. 381.

Preparation. Dear children, "if upon every lying mouth a lock had to be placed, the noble art of the locksmith would indeed be the very best trade in the world." That is a true proverb. Do you understand it? —There is a great deal of lying done. And yet every lie is a sin and a disgrace before God. We have already learned that in the last class. Let us first review it. *(Question the pupils briefly on the preceding lesson).* —Telling lies and playing the hypocrite is hateful. But even worse is the sin of detraction and calumny, backbiting and rash judgments. These sins also belong to the eighth Commandment.

Aim. We shall learn about that today. Therefore we ask: *Is it right to think and to speak evil of others?* —Just listen to how a woman was cured of wicked talk against others.

Presentation. In a certain old convent there lived a monk named Magnus. The people called him "good Father Magnus" for he was a very kind and lovable man. But there was one thing about which he could get angry at once—about wicked tongues. He had a unique means of thoroughly spoiling the trade of talkative busybodies.

One day the Father wanted to go to a village about five miles distant from his convent, in order to pay a visit to the pastor who was sick. Now it happened that a certain woman joined him and asked: "I have to go the same way. Will you allow me, Father, to go with you?" "Oh, yes! my good woman," said the priest. Scarcely were they outside of the town, when the good priest realized why the talkative woman had joined his company. She had something on her mind, and that had to come out at any price. Therefore she began: "Reverend Father Magnus, you would hardly believe

what sort of a woman my neighbor is—you know her of course!" At once the Father interrupted her, saying: "Well, then, let us immediately say a devout Rosary for her, in order that she may be converted. In the name of the Father and of the Son"—And so he said the whole long Rosary of fifteen decades with the busybody at his side.

Finally they were finished, and the woman was heartily glad to be able to catch a little fresh air again. But it was not long before she began again: "O, dear Father Magnus, it is almost impossible for me to get along with my neighbor!" But the Father was quickly at hand with an answer: "Well, then, let us pray a Rosary for you too, so that you may be able to put up with her. In the name of the Father and of the Son"—and again the poor woman had to say the threefold Rosary.

They had already covered three fourths of the distance. Hold! the talkative daughter of Eve thought to herself; I must have my say in spite of all. And again she tried her luck: "Father, you would hardly believe what that poor man, our neighbor, has to suffer from his better half!" But Father Magnus was ready again, and immediately cut off the thread of her conversation by saying: "Indeed, in order that you may see that I really believe you, let us recite a real generous Rosary for your suffering neighbor, so that he may be able to bear his cross patiently. In the name of the Father and of the Son."—At the last Amen they had arrived at the end of their journey. The Father took care to give the woman a few more grains of salt, that is, of good instruction, and said: "So, dear woman, if ever you want to visit this village again, it will be a pleasure for me! Today you have learned how to pray real diligently."—That helped. The woman was fully cured of her failing. But she was peeved, or out of humor, and said, "No, Father, I will never go with you again as long as I live! May God protect you, Father!"

Explanation. 1. This story makes you laugh; but there is a good kernel of teaching in that story. The proverb says: "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh!" The woman, too, had a full heart; inwardly she was full of anger and spite against her wicked neighbor. Now she just wanted to pour out her full heart. Perhaps it was true, that her neighbor was really a wicked woman; perhaps, too, her poor husband and other people had to suffer a good deal because of her wicked tongue. But may one reveal these faults without necessity?—You see; this neighbor was held in esteem and honor by the good Father. But if that woman were to relate all evil about her neighbor, she would be taking away a part of her honor, as it were; she would be acting like an animal that bites its victim in the back, while it is not looking. Is that right?—No, indeed; for that is the sin of detraction or backbiting. **The eighth Commandment forbids all backbiting or detraction.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard; see the diagram below just above the synthesis).* Therefore backbiting or detraction is revealing or telling the faults of others without any necessity.

But why is that a sin? Backbiting or detraction is unkind and God cannot bear such an uncharitable behaviour. If one touches the wings of a butterfly only a little bit, the beautiful colors become defaced. And if one touches one's neighbor by unkind talk, one deprives that neighbor of his honor and good name; and that is unkind and sinful.—(The backbiter or detractor acts like the flies. They perch themselves only on the rotten parts of an apple and gnaw and bite those parts. And how does the pig act? It prefers to grovel in the filth. That woman of our story looked only at the evil in her neighbor and then told that to others).—But may one not speak at all of the faults of others? O, yes, if one really means well. Just suppose that the woman wanted to ask the Father for good advice, saying: "How ought I to act, in order to live in peace with

my neighbor?" Yes, at times it is even a duty to reveal the faults of others. Recall what Joseph of Egypt did. —He told his father all the wicked things of his brothers. But why? He wanted to make his brothers better; he thought to himself, that his father would see to it, that such things never happen again. That was kind of Joseph. But the woman gossip of our story did that only because she was unkind and uncharitable. Remember then *we are allowed, and even bound, to reveal the faults of others, 1, when it is for the good of the guilty person, or 2, when it is necessary for preventing a greater evil. (Repeat together).*

2. He who likes to trumpet forth the faults of others, also likes to exaggerate them. There were most probably some few grains of truth in what the woman of our story told about her neighbor. But I do not doubt at all that she made the faults much greater than they really were in fact; out of a fly, as we say, she made an elephant. Most probably she was not very much in earnest with the truth at all, and even imputed faults to her neighbor, which this woman did not have at all. Therefore she was guilty of slander or calumny. **—The eighth Commandment forbids all slanders.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

Slander or calumny is much worse than backbiting or detraction. The backbiter or detractor speaks the truth, but the slanderer or calumniator speaks the untruth. The backbiter reveals the real faults of his neighbor, but the slanderer makes known untrue or invented faults of his neighbor. In such speech there is a far greater malice. The Holy Ghost says of such people: "The poison of the asp is under their lips" (Ps. xiii, 3). Yes, that is true. The woman of our story had a poisonous tongue like an asp.—(St. Bernard says so truly and beautifully: "Slander is a threefold sword, that with one blow causes three wounds: it wounds him who slanders, because by taking away his neighbor's fair name he harms his own soul; it wounds him, who is slandered, because he loses his honor; and

it wounds him, who listens to the slander, because listening to such talk is also a sin").

3. The Holy Ghost says: "A good name is better than riches" (Proverbs xxii, 1). We all like to have others think and speak well of us. A good reputation, or a good name, is the best thing on earth; it is a talent entrusted to us by God, for he who has a good reputation can do a great deal of good, because he has influence over others. Moreover, who can enjoy life, if he knows that he is despised by his fellow-men? It is God's will that we should be jealous of our good name and reputation. For that reason He has implanted in us feelings of honor and a detestation of shame or disgrace. If this is true in regard to us, it is just as true in regard to our neighbor. Therefore God commands us by the eighth Commandment to be most careful of our neighbor's honor and reputation. Our Catechism says: **We are commanded by the eighth Commandment to be careful of the honor and reputation of every one.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

4. Now let us suppose that that poor sinner, the woman in our story, wanted to go to confession. If she has been guilty of slander, what must she do?—Repent, that is the first duty; for without sorrow there is no mercy with God. Yet that is not enough. Be reconciled, that is the second duty; for without reconciliation there is no peace with God. That is, however, not yet enough. Recall what she has said, that is the third duty; for without retracting the slander there is no forgiveness from God. But how is that to be done?—The woman must take courage and say openly—and all who have before heard the evil remarks must hear it—: "I have lied. What I have said is not true. I am sorry for having made that person appear so wicked." —Perhaps that woman was a business woman. The people have heard the wicked speech. They will not, of course, buy anything more from her. In that case the woman that slandered her, must also repair the injury she has done her. **They who have lied about their**

neighbor and seriously injured his character must repair the injury done as far as they are able, otherwise they will not be forgiven. *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

Matters are a little different, if the woman has sinned by backbiting or detraction. She cannot recall what she has said; for otherwise she would be telling a lie. Heretofore she has placed the faults of her neighbor in the light; now she ought to place the good qualities of her neighbor in the light. She can say for example: "This neighbor woman is really a good and industrious housekeeper. She is a good mother to her children. She likes to give alms to the poor. She fulfils her Christian duties conscientiously."—*Those who have injured their neighbor by detraction or backbiting, should try to excuse their neighbor, and to repair his honor by some other lawful means. (Repeat together).*

5. Now tell me, how did the woman come to speak so wickedly about her neighbor?—Evidently she first thought evil of her in her heart. May one think evil of others? Yes and no! Perhaps the woman had often noticed, how her neighbor got into quarrels with other people and called her husband bad names. In that case she, of course, had good reason for thinking to herself: My neighbor is a wicked woman. That was then no sin; for love or charity does not demand, that we be blind to the faults of our neighbor. But it is also possible, that the woman suspected evil without a sufficient reason, simply because she could not endure or bear her neighbor. In that case it was a sin, namely false suspicion.—*We sin by false suspicion, when, without sufficient reason, we surmise evil of our neighbor. (Repeat together).* That too, is forbidden by the eighth Commandment. St. Paul writes: "Charity thinketh no evil" (I Cor. xiii, 5). What does he mean? —Whoever has Christian love or charity in his heart, will not think evil of others without a good reason.

Only a bad man likes to think evil of his brothers. A good man thinks good also of others.

6. A suspicious person generally has doubts too; he only suspects evil, he is not absolutely sure of it. But generally he does not stop at doubts; he goes farther. The doubt soon becomes a certainty. "Yes," such a person says, "it is absolutely certain; that is just like that person; that is what he would do!" That is *rash judgment, when, without sufficient reason, we believe the evil to be true and certain. (Report together).* **The eighth Commandment forbids all rash judgments.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

Write on the blackboard:

1. Sins against the eighth Commandment—backbiting (detraction); slander (calumny); rash judgments (4).

2. Duties—to be careful of the honor and reputation of all.

3. Slanderer must make restitution, otherwise no forgiveness.

Synthesis. St. James says: "The tongue is indeed a little member, but a world of iniquity" (iii, 5). Backbiting and slander are two wicked brothers. How does a person sin by backbiting or detraction? by slander or calumny? by rash judgments? by false suspicion? A person who has false suspicions against another thinks to himself: "He did it probably." He who rashly judges his neighbor thinks to himself: "He certainly did it." What, then, does the eighth Commandment forbid? What does it command? What must we do, if we have slandered our neighbor? *(Have the pupils read the answers from the Catechism. Assign the lesson for the next class).*

Application. 1. To take away one's honor is an easy matter, but to restore it is difficult. Therefore the Saints were afraid of sins of the tongue. St. Augustine wrote on his table: "They are to avoid this table,

who delight in depriving others of their fair name!" And St. Bernard once said: "The devil sits upon the tongue of him who speaks evil of others; and the devil sits in the ears of him who likes to hear such talk." Do you understand what he means to say?—But what ought you to do, when others speak unkindly and evil of others? "Hedge in thy ears with thorns, hear not a wicked tongue, and make doors and bars to thy mouth" (Ecclesiasticus xxxviii, 28). Father Magnus did that. Therefore he commenced to recite the Rosary at once. That was a good medicine; that worked well. This severe lesson the woman did not forget as long as she lived.—Of course, not every one can do that. But every one can do something else, and this good advice the Holy Ghost gives us, saying: "The north wind driveth away the rain, as doth a sad countenance a backbiting tongue" (Proverbs xxv, 23). Yes, when you hear others using talk, that is likely to ruin the good name or reputation of your neighbor, make a serious face and say nothing. That will work like a charm. Then the wicked tongue will stop at once throwing poison and filth at others.

2. Have you, too, at times misused your tongues? Have you falsely accused your brothers and sisters, your comrades? Have you spoken about the hidden faults of others? Have you taken pleasure in such talk? Have you always sincerely confessed such sins? Have you recalled your lies about your neighbor?—I know a second remedy against slander. Just listen! An old saying of the East relates the following: Once several people were standing about a dead dog in the street. One of them said: "Oh! how that carcass smells," and he held his nose tightly. Another said: "Oh! how it is covered with dirt." A third said: "And it has scarcely any hair left!" A fourth said: "Phew!" and gave it a kick. Then the Lord Jesus, too, approached and spoke according to the mildness of His Heart: "The teeth of the dog are beautiful and shining white like pearls!" Then the faultfinders felt ashamed

of themselves for having noticed only the hateful things, and they blushed and were silent.—In this saying there is a precious lesson.—If others speak evil things, you say good things of your neighbor! That is Christian. Everyone has still some good spot or other about him; bring that kindly into the light! But if the vicious tongue is not yet silent, then ask the question: "Have you no faults, that you delight so much to throw mud and stones at others?" Perhaps such a person will be ashamed of himself and will keep quiet. Remember, that whoever likes to speak ill of others is strewing little bits of glass in his own death-bed!

3. Just a few more examples! I have spoken of you about St. Vincent de Paul (cf. Lesson IV). When a young priest he lived in the house of an official. About that time 600 dollars were stolen from that official. At once he was suspicious of the Saint: and yet Vincent was absolutely innocent. — A child has often stolen money and taken little things secretly from home. The father notices again, that money has been taken from him. At once he is suspicious of that child. Is he unjust in his suspicions?—Something has been taken from a child. Immediately that child says to others: "I know who has taken that from me; it is so and so without a doubt!" But if one asks: "How do you know that?" the child simply says: "There is no need of any proofs." A child likes to go to church. Another child says: "O! he only goes to be praised in school and to get a holy picture!"—A jeweler once had a good helper, or apprentice, working for him. On a certain occasion several jewels were stolen from this jeweler. He found them in a corner of the window-sill of that helper's room. Immediately the employer believed that the boy had stolen them. He struck him severely and chased him in disgrace from his house. Later on he found other jewels in the same place. He watched carefully and saw that a tame bird that he had in the house was the thief. The man felt sorry for what he had done to that boy, but he could not repair the injury

any more.—There you see, how wickedly rash judgment and false suspicions can end. Therefore Jesus Himself has warned us against them, saying: "Judge not, that you may not be judged" (Matt. vii, 11). You all know the old proverb: "Speech is silver, but silence is gold!"

LESSON XXVII.

Sinful Desires.

Catechetical Unit:

1) What is the ninth Commandment? L. XXXIV, Q. 382.

2) What is the tenth Commandment? L. XXXIV, Q. 386.

3) What is forbidden by the ninth Commandment? L. XXXIV, Q. 384.

4) Are impure thoughts and desires always sins? L. XXXIV, Q. 385.

5) What are we commanded by the ninth Commandment? L. XXXIV, Q. 383.

6) What is forbidden by the tenth Commandment? L. XXXIV, Q. 388.

7) What are we commanded by the tenth Commandment. L. XXXIV, Q. 387.

Preparation. Dear children, once a certain woman went to a holy priest to confession. She had a very wicked tongue and liked to talk ill of her neighbors. The Saint imposed this penance upon her: "Go to the market and buy a chicken for yourself! On the way home pick the feathers of the chicken and, when you get home, prepare it for the table. After eight days come to me again and tell me how faithfully you have carried out these instructions." The woman thought to herself: "That is certainly a very peculiar penance!" But she faithfully did all according as the Saint had ordered her to do. — After the specified time had

elapsed, she again went to the priest to confess! "Go through all the streets, where you have plucked the feathers of the chicken, and gather them all together again!" All in wonder the woman replied: "But that is altogether impossible! The wind has scattered them far and wide a long time ago!" Then the Saint replied: "That is just the way it is in regard to your wicked and slanderous talk; those words of yours have been scattered far and wide. How can one take them back again? How can you repair all the harm which you have done?"—Let us first review the preceding lesson. *(Question the pupils briefly on the foregoing lesson).* —In the sixth Commandment God says: "Thou shalt not do anything immodest or impure!" What sins does this Commandment forbid?—What safeguards ought we to make use of against these sins?—The sixth and the ninth Commandments belong together. Let us say the ninth Commandment together: **The ninth Commandment is: Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife.** *(Use the blackboard; see the diagram below just above the synthesis).* God means to say: You may not even desire impure things!

In the seventh Commandment God says: "Thou mayest not violate the property of another!" What sins does this Commandment forbid? What must they do, that have unjustly taken what belongs to their neighbor?—In the tenth Commandment God goes even further and says: "Thou mayest not even desire to possess the property of thy neighbor in an unjust manner!" Let us say the tenth Commandment together. **The tenth Commandment: Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's goods.** *(Use the blackboard; see the diagram below just above the synthesis).* Consequently God forbids in the last two Commandments all sinful desires.

Aim. I shall show you: *how dangerous bad desires are, and how we ought to be on our guard against sinful desires.*

Presentation. In the early Christian ages there were many hermits. They served the Lord, far removed from the sinful life of the world, by zealous prayer and penance. Now there was a certain hermit, who had a disciple: a good and pious youth. He wanted to become a Saint. But he had to suffer many battles. In his heart oftentimes the storms raged and surged as upon the wild and tempestuous sea. His imagination pictured wicked and detestable things, and impure desires arose daily in his heart. Then again would Satan whisper into his ear: "Return to the world, I will make you wealthy. You shall have all that your heart desires!"

In his affliction the disciple came to his master, and begged for help, saying: "Good master! what shall I do, that my heart may remain pure and untainted?" The old hermit did not speak many words. He went with his pupil into a woods nearby, showed him four trees, and said: "Here, do you see these four cypresses? Well, then, get busy and tear them up by the roots!" The youth was not a little surprised at this remarkable command of his master. But obedient, as he was, he at once set himself to the task.

He began with the smallest tree, which was hardly several years old. One pull, one jerk—and it lay upon the ground. The second tree was already a little bigger. The young man grasped it with both hands, and soon the work was over. The third cypress was no longer a little tree, but a large tree which had already struck its roots deeply into the earth. Here the work was not so easy. The young man had to tug and pull away for all he was worth. Finally the earth loosened about the roots—and he had won. "Thanks be to God!" he said, "that was indeed a difficult piece of work." Now the fourth cypress came for its turn. But already the mere sight of that immense tree was enough to make the courage of that youth sink. For it was indeed a strong, tall tree. He pulled and tugged away at it with all the strength of his body, so that the perspira-

tion ran down in big drops from his forehead. But the tree did not even budge in the soil; all his efforts were useless. Finally the youth gave up the work, saying: "I cannot do any more!"

The master had been watching his pupil at his work quietly and in silence. But now he said to him: "Listen, my son! So it is with passions. If they have not already struck deep roots in the garden of the heart, if they have been there only for a short while, you can still pull them out easily and quickly. Therefore do not lose the right moment, and pull the little tree of wicked passion and sin out of your heart at once!"

Explanation. 1. a) The youth understood very well what his master wanted to say to him. Do you, too, understand the good lesson?—You see that young man was tortured much by the passion for impure pleasure: oftentimes wicked and detestable things entered into his mind. But the evil had not yet taken root in his heart. As yet the wicked passion was weak like the first little tree. But you yourselves know, that little trees become bigger and stronger continually from year to year. That is precisely the way things are in regard to impure passions. If one allows these passions to remain in one's heart, the evil grows stronger continually from day to day, and finally it will soon cover the entire heart like a wild overgrowth of weeds. And then? Then the very same thing will happen to the poor sinner that happened to the young man of our story, when he took hold of the fourth of those cypresses: he will no longer be able to get the evil out of his heart, the wicked desires will spoil his whole heart. Now you will understand, why the old hermit said: "Therefore do not lose the right moment, and pull that tree at once out of your heart!" Yes, *evil desires defile the heart, and finally lead also to evil actions.* Therefore God gave the ninth Commandment: "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife!" He means to say: Thou shalt not entertain immodest or impure desires towards thy neighbor's wife. Conse-

quently the ninth Commandment is meant, in the first place, for married people. **The ninth Commandment forbids unchaste desires of another's wife or husband.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

b) Just think of St. John the Baptist! Unterrified he went to King Herod and said boldly: "It is not allowed to thee, to have the wife of thy brother!" Of course, this courage cost him his life. But John was right. Indeed God forbids even the mere desire of having the wife of another. But the ninth Commandment is not for married people only, but for all persons, both great and small. The good God means: Thou shalt not think or desire anything immodest or unchaste. **—The ninth Commandment forbids all other unlawful impure thoughts and desires.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

2. But tell me: Whence do these impure thoughts and desires come, that at times stir within our hearts and minds?—They are poisonous weeds, which come from the first sin. Ever since Adam's sin there is a poisonous root in the heart of every man, and from that root many weeds have sprouted and grown in wild abundance. Here it is a question of saying to ourselves unceasingly: Out with these weeds from the garden of the heart! But remember, that whoever takes no pleasure in those immodest thoughts and desires; whoever is displeased with them, does not commit sin.—**Impure thoughts and desires are always sins, unless they displease us and we try to banish them.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*—The young man of our story detested them; for he wanted to become a Saint. That is how every true, pious Christian acts. For God wants us to think of such things only as are modest and holy (Phil. iv, 8). 3. Hence **we are commanded by the ninth Commandment to keep ourselves pure in thought and desire.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

4. Young people like to dream of good fortune and to build all sorts of air castles; they would like some

time to become rich and lead an easy and comfortable life. That is how the young man of our story, too, felt many a time. What did the tempter picture to his imagination?—To amass money and possessions and to become rich—that is not as yet a sin; but it must take place in an honorable manner. Yes, a true Christian ought to work industriously and save, in order that he might get into comfortable circumstances. To strive covetously after money and possessions and to desire to get rich at any cost, that is dangerous. Such people very easily forget God and Heaven and their immortal soul, and get into the habit of stealing and cheating and all sorts of wickedness. Therefore St. Paul said once: "They that will become rich, fall into temptation, and into the snare of the devil, and into many unprofitable and hurtful desires, which drown men into destruction and perdition" (I Tim. vi, 9). How true that is! Why did Judas fall so deeply?—Covetousness ensnared his heart. He never had enough, but he always wanted to have more and more. He had entirely forgotten that **the tenth Commandment forbids all desires to take or keep wrongfully what belongs to another.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).* That was his ruin. Thus the unhappy Apostle became a thief and a cheat, a betrayer and in the end even a suicide.—Why did King Achab become a murderer?—The desire for another's goods, the unlawful desire for the property of others, burned in his heart like a fire. He wanted to have the vineyard of Naboth at any cost; no means were too wicked for him to satisfy his covetousness, his unlawful desires. There you see again how evil desires spoil the heart and lead easily to wicked deeds. If the youth of our story had consented to the unlawful desires, how easily he, too, might have fallen just as deeply! The hermit knew the danger very well. Therefore he admonished the young man so fatherly: "Do not neglect the right moment, and tear up the tree of sin by the roots!" The disciple took the words of his master to heart and tore

out from his heart the poisonous weeds together with the roots. That was well done. For "the desire of money is the root of all evils" (I. Tim. vi, 10).

5. That is how every true Christian acts; he thinks to himself: What have I, if I possess the property of another? When I die, I must give up all in the end, and I cannot take anything with me into eternity: I will not give away my immortal soul for anything. Therefore I will be content with what I have, and I will rejoice in my neighbor's welfare. That is what God commands of us all. **By the tenth Commandment we are commanded to be content with what we have, and to rejoice in our neighbor's welfare.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*—That is what God wills. He is indeed most wealthy, who is satisfied and content; he who is dissatisfied, is indeed the very poorest of mortals. It is far better to be poor and honest, than rich and dishonest.

Write on the blackboard:

1. "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife!"

2. Sins—impure desires of another's wife or husband; all unchaste desires and thoughts.

3. Impure thoughts and desires not sinful—if we are displeased with them, and banish them.

4. Duties—to be pure in thought and desire.

5. "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's goods!"

6. Sins—all desires to take and keep wrongfully what is another's.

7. Duties—to be content with what we have—to rejoice in our neighbor's welfare.

Synthesis. One must diligently cultivate and take care of a garden. There is much labor and many pains connected with it. Again and again one must tear out the weeds, which continually spring up. Our heart's garden, too, requires much labor, many pains, otherwise the flowers of virtue will not thrive. Here it is a question of being watchful and of pulling out again

and again the luxurious weeds of evil desires. We saw that in today's lesson in the case of the young man. What is the ninth Commandment? What does it forbid? What does it command? Are bad thoughts and desires always sinful? What is the tenth Commandment? What does it forbid? What does it command? *(Have the pupils read the answers from the Catechism. Assign the lesson for the next class).*

Application. 1. Worldlings like to say: "Thoughts pay no toll." What do they mean?—"I can think and desire what I will; that is nobody's concern." That is true, that does not concern any man. A worldly judge cannot punish our thoughts and desires, for he is unable to look into the heart of man. But there is *one,* who examines man's mind and heart—God. In His sight thoughts and desires are not free. The Divine Judge pursues evil to its very roots in man's heart. Never forget that and chase away from your mind and heart every wicked thought and desire as you would a bold thief. Just look quickly at your Saviour on the Cross! "My God hangs on a cross—and I should give myself over to evil desires!" (St. Bernard). "My Jesus was so poor in life and died so utterly poor—and I should allow myself to be covetous!"

2. Here is a child that complains: Bad thoughts and desires creep again and again into my mind and heart! Do not be disturbed, my child, that is not yet a sin.—St. Catherine of Siena was tortured by severe temptations against holy purity. At times it seemed to her as if she had been entirely abandoned by God. Then our Blessed Saviour appeared to her on a certain occasion. She complained to Him about her heart's sorrow, saying: "O my Jesus, heavenly Bridegroom! Where wast Thou, when my soul was being tortured with such detestable things?" The Lord consoled her, saying: "I was in the midst of thy heart!" "But how couldst Thou be in my heart? It was all filled with filth." Jesus instructed her: "This filth hath not soiled thy heart, because thou didst detest

it."—Did you hear? Where there is a detestation of sin, there neither is there any filth of sin. Therefore immediately put away all sinful pleasure out of your heart! For you, too, does that advice of the hermit hold good: "Neglect not the right moment and tear out the tree of sin from your heart!" *Pray perseveringly, work diligently, fight courageously!* That is the weapon of the Christian.

Pray perseveringly! That gives one heavenly strength. St. Theresa once was terribly tempted by bad thoughts. She saw Satan continually shooting fiery arrows or darts at her. But all of them recoiled harmlessly; for she was surrounded by a golden coat of armour. The Saint was astonished. But the Saviour explained to her the meaning, saying: "See, that armour are your ejaculations; they protect your soul just like an armour of purest gold." Therefore ejaculations have such a wonderful power!

Work diligently! The devil ought never to find you idle.

Fight courageously! Without battle there is no victory. A Christian must be a soldier; with the sword in his hand he must conquer Heaven.

"Brave is the conqueror of the lion,
Brave is the conquerer of a world,
Braver still, who conquers self!"

II.

THE COMMANDMENTS OF THE CHURCH

LESSON I.

The Ecclesiastical Holydays.[1]

Catechetical Unit:

1) Which are the chief Commandments of the Church? L. XXXV, Q. 389.

2) Which are the holydays of obligation? (Supplementary).

3) Why were the holydays instituted by the Church? L. XXXV, Q. 391.

4) How should we keep the holydays of obligation? L. XXXV, Q. 392.

(N. B. The catechist will find it more convenient to spread this instruction over two separate classes).

Preparation. Dear children, we are all children of the Catholic Church. That is truly a good fortune. But when I say the "Church," you must not, of course, think of the dead church, where Divine services are held. I mean the living Church, the great Christian family upon earth. Who is the father of this family? —Our Holy Father, the Pope. What is his name?— Who was the first Pope?—The Pope is the father of the whole Church. The Bishops, too, are fathers, but only of a part of the Church (of a diocese). What is our Bishop's name?—Do you know who the first Bishops were?—The Pope and the Bishops preside over the Church; therefore they are called the *rulers* of the Church.—When a father commands something to be done, or to be omitted, the children are bound to obey. When the Pope and the Bishops command anything, what are we all obliged to do?—Yes, we ought to be obedient children of the Church; that is what God wills.

1) We recommend to catechists the excellent English version and adaptation of Dr. Heinrich Stieglitz's "*Kinderlehren über das Kirchenjahr*" from the pen of Rev. Anthony B. Kruegler, S. T. L.; under the title "*The Church Year*," Talks to Children. (The Macmillan Co.; New York, 1923).

(Now let us review a little. From whom did the *first Pope* get the right and power (authority) to rule and govern the faithful?—What words did Christ say to St. Peter?—"Feed My lambs; feed My sheep!" Yes, St. Peter is the Chief Shepherd in Christ's Church. For Jesus made St. Peter the chief of the Apostles and the visible Head of the whole Church. You all have already seen a flock of sheep. The shepherd goes ahead and the sheep follow willingly; the shepherd leads the flock. He leads them to good pastures, keeps them together and protects them against dangers. The shepherd, therefore, also rules the flock. Thus St. Peter, too, was chosen to be a shepherd for the lambs and the sheep of Christ: for the faithful, great and small. Peter is to go ahead and all Christians are to follow him; he is to lead them. Yes, he must lead them to good pastures, keep them united and protect them from all dangers; he is to rule them. You see, then, that St. Peter may also give Commandments to all the faithful in Christ's name.—Now who takes St. Peter's place?—Therefore the Pope, the Bishop of Rome, the visible Head of the Church, the successor of St. Peter, has the same right and power (authority) that St. Peter had, to rule and govern the faithful. He does this in Christ's name. Consequently the Pope, too, may give Commandments; he may also punish disobedient children of the Church; yes, he has even the power of excluding (excommunicating) disobedient children from the true fold of Christ.

But St. Peter was not to rule and govern the faithful alone; the *other Apostles* were to help him in this work. Jesus said that very plainly: "Amen I say to you: whatsoever you shall bind upon earth, shall be bound also in Heaven; and whatsoever you shall loose upon earth, shall be loosed also in Heaven" (Matt. xviii, 18). What does the phrase mean "to bind and to loose?"—It means: "If you bind the faithful to a Commandment, they are indeed bound thereto by God in Heaven; and if you loose or excuse them from a

Commandment they are loosed or excused therefrom also by God in Heaven!" You see, therefore, that St. Peter and the other Apostles are to rule and govern the Church. Christ Himself gave them that power (authority). He commissioned them to do that in His name.

But who are the successors of the Apostles?—The Bishops, therefore, have also the right and power (authority) to rule and govern the faithful in Christ's name. When they make Commandments in God's name, we are obliged in conscience to obey them. *The Church,* therefore, *that is, the Pope and the Bishops have the right to give Commandments from Jesus Himself, Who has commissioned them to guide the faithful in His name. (Repeat together).*

The Church has given many Commandments in the course of the ages. These Commandments are gathered together in a special book called the **Canon Law.** *(Write the word on the blackboard; show the pupils a copy of the Code).* Many of these laws are meant only for certain members of the Church; while others are meant for all Christians without exception. In this country there are six chief Commandments, that bind all the faithful. Our Catechism says: **The chief Commandments of the Church are six: 1. to hear Mass on Sundays and holydays of obligation; 2. to fast and abstain on the days appointed; 3. to confess at least once a year; 4. to receive the Holy Eucharist during the Easter time; 5. to contribute to the support of our pastors; 6. not to marry persons who are not Catholics, or who are related to us within the third degree of kindred, nor privately without witnesses, nor to solemnize marriage at forbidden times.** *(Repeat together).*

These Commandments of the Church *bind us,* that is, we all have a duty, are obliged in conscience, to obey them. Therefore whoever breaks one of these Commandments, commits sin in God's sight. But as you know, there are different kinds of duties; strict, that is, very serious duties, for example not to kill, and

whoever does not observe these Commandments, commits a mortal sin; and there are lighter duties, which are not so strict, for example, not to get angry, etc., and whoever does not observe these Commandments, also commits a sin, but only a venial sin. Now how do the Commandments of the Church bind us?—Is there a strict duty upon all to obey them, or only a light duty?—Does he who breaks a Commandment of the Church commit a mortal or a venial sin?—*The Commandments of the Church bind us strictly—that is, under pain of grievous or mortal sin. (Repeat together).* But, of course, that does not mean, that whoever breaks a Commandment of the Church only slightly (for example, to come a little late to Mass), commits a mortal sin. No; whoever breaks a Commandment of the Church in a slight matter, does not commit a mortal sin; only he is guilty of mortal sin, who, knowingly and willingly, does not keep the Commandment at all, or who breaks a Commandment in a serious matter (as for instance, to eat meat on a Friday, etc.). Remember what Christ Himself says: "If he will not hear the Church, let him be to thee as the heathen and publican" (Matt. xviii, 17).

As faithful and loving children of God's Church you all desire most sincerely to please God. Therefore you must also keep the Commandments, which He gives us through the mouth of His Holy Church. Now we are going to study these six chief Commandments of the Church, so that we may be able to observe them as loving and obedient children of God.

(As proximate preparation for the lesson the catechist will point to the nearest holyday of obligation as a connecting link with the ecclesiastical holydays in general). In the Church there are Sundays and holydays. From whom does the Sunday come?—The Sunday is from God; it is the Lord's own day. Whence do the holydays come?—The holydays were instituted by the Church. It is the Church's most solemn will, that all her children observe the Sundays and certain other

holydays. In our country there are six days, besides all the Sundays of the year, which all Catholics are in conscience obliged to observe.

Aim. Today (and in the next class) *we are going to look at these holydays of the Church one after the other.* Every Catholic ought to know these holydays by heart. Let us, then, begin with the ecclesiastical or Church year. The ecclesiastical year does not commence with the first day of January, but rather with the first Sunday of Advent—four weeks before the feast of Christmas.

Presentation and Explanation.

I. The Feasts of the Lord.

1. When the ecclesiastical year has begun, in Advent, the children of the Church begin to look forward with joy and longing for the dearest of all the feast days—**Christmas.** *(Use the blackboard).* An angel of the Lord brings us the glad tidings: "Behold! I bring you good tidings of great joy; for Christ, the Saviour, is born." Then we hasten with the pious shepherds to the crib and gaze upon the Divine Christ Child, and offer our devout prayers to Him.—A week later is the Name-day of the Christ Child (New Year's day). On this day the Divine Child was circumcised and received the name of Jesus. This feast is called by the Church: the **Circumcision of the Lord** *(blackboard).*—A few days later we observe another feast: **Epiphany** *(blackboard).* Then Christ appeared for the first time to the Gentiles, or the heathens, to the three wise men from the distant East, who were called to the feet of the Saviour by the wondrous star in the heavens. (Therefore this feast is also called the feast of the Apparition of the Lord, or the feast of the Three Kings).—Forty days after Christ's birth we make a pilgrimage to the Temple at Jerusalem. There the Divine Child was offered to the Lord. Therefore it is called the feast of the **Presentation of the Lord in the Temple,** or more commonly Candlemas *(blackboard).*

But then things gradually became serious and sad in the Church. Soon the mournful time of penance, the holy season of Lent, begins. It ends with Holy Week. During this season we mourn and suffer and deny ourselves with the Suffering Saviour. But soon our mourning is turned into joy. Already on the morning of Holy Saturday we hear the jubilant "Alleluja! Christ is arisen!" **Easter** is here *(blackboard)*. So great is our joy that we cannot fully express our happiness in *one* day: so we celebrate also Easter Monday and Tuesday as festive days.—For forty more days Jesus sojourned on earth; then He ascended into Heaven before the eyes of His disciples. Consequently forty days after Easter we celebrate the glorious feast of the **Ascension of Christ into Heaven** *(blackboard)*.—Then we prepare ourselves for the Holy Ghost as the Apostles once did; then after ten days is the feast of **Pentecost** *(blackboard.)* This great feast also lasts for two days after Pentecost just like Easter.—After another week we have arrived at the very height of the ecclesiastical year. Again we thank the three Divine Persons for all the love and goodness, they have shown us, by celebrating the great feast of the **Most Blessed Trinity** *(blackboard)*.—But after that we again descend towards the end of the ecclesiastical year. We have only one more great feast of the Lord, namely on the Thursday after the feast of the Most Blessed Trinity. It is the feast of **Corpus Christi** *(blackboard)*. Then Jesus passes in solemn procession through the church, and in Catholic countries also through the streets, in the blessed Sacrament of the Altar.

2. Now if we look at these holydays one after the other, what is it that strikes us especially?—What do we do during the ecclesiastical year?—We go through the life of Jesus upon earth. Therefore we can say in all truth: *the ecclesiastical year is a short life of Jesus. (Repeat together).*

3. But not all of the feastdays of the Lord are equally solemn and holy: three of them are special

solemn feasts of joy: Christmas, Easter and Pentecost. These three belong to the three Divine Persons. Christmas is eminently the feast of the Father; then out of the purest love He gave us His dearest, most precious possession—the Divine Child. Easter is eminently the feast of the Son; for then out of purest love for us He entered into the midst of suffering and death, and in the end He arose again gloriously from the dead, that we might live forever. Pentecost is eminently the feast of the Holy Ghost; for then out of purest love He came down upon us, and will come again and pour out His graces into our hearts.

4. Let us try to remember these holydays of the Lord God in their order. Some of these feasts fall upon a Sunday (Easter, Pentecost, Most Blessed Trinity); others are holydays of obligation for the whole Church, even though they do not fall on a Sunday. In our country we celebrate, besides all the Sundays of the year, the three following holydays of obligation: Christmas, the feast of the Circumcision of the Lord (New Year's day) and the Ascension of the Lord into Heaven. You will notice: I have underlined them on the blackboard. There are, of course, very many other feasts of the Lord in the course of the ecclesiastical year; but these are the most important.

Write on the blackboard:

1. **Christmas**—*Christ's Nativity* (Dec. 25);
2. *Circumcision of the Lord* (New Year's day) —Christ's Name-day (Jan. 1).
3. Epiphany—Apparition of the Lord (Three King's day); (Candlemas—Presentation of the Lord in the temple (Feb. 2);
4. **Easter**—Resurrection of Christ;
5. *Ascension of Christ;*
6. **Pentecost**—Descent of the Holy Ghost;
7. Most Blessed Trinity;
8. Corpus Christi—Blessed Sacrament.

Synthesis. Are there any other Commandments besides the Ten Commandments, which we are obliged to observe? How many Commandments of the Church are there? In what book are they found? From whom did the Church get the power to make Commandments? Do these laws bind under pain of sin? Which are the six chief Commandments? When does the ecclesiastical year commence? Name the chief feasts in honor of the Lord. Which of these are the most solemn? What do we do during the ecclesiastical year? What, then, is the ecclesiastical year? Which are the holydays of obligation in honor of the Lord in our country? Are these the only feasts in honor of the Lord in the Church calendar? *(Assign the lesson for the next class).*

Application. *What ought we to do on the feasts of the Lord?*—We ought to think and to pray. First we ought to think of what Jesus has done for us! Jesus wanted to live and to suffer and to die, in order that we might not die, but might live eternally. Think of that and thank the Lord for that! To imitate the life of Jesus—that is the very best thanks: for a Christian ought to be a little Christ. Then some day we shall be permitted to celebrate an eternal holyday and day of joy with Jesus in Heaven.

Presentation and Explanation.

II. Feasts of Mary.

1. We have eight principal feasts in the ecclesiastical year in honor of the Lord. But at the same time we must remember, that we do not forget Mary, the Mother of the Lord. We celebrate five principal feasts in her honor.—Every year four weeks before Christmas we observe the season of Advent. This little Advent ought to remind us of the great Advent, the four thousand years before Christ, the Messias. During this long and sad period the hearts of most men were cold and benumbed, as it were, in the ice and snow of their many sins. Only *one* little flower sprung up and

bloomed in secret, like a beautiful flower from Heaven, a little snowdrop—Mary. When winter has set in, during the Advent season, surely it is most fitting that we celebrate a beautiful feast in Mary's honor. I mean the great feast of the **Immaculate Conception of Mary.** *(Use the blackboard).* This feast means: Mary began her life with her soul absolutely pure and spotless, without original sin.—We have already heard of another feast in honor of Mary—the feast of her **Purification** or Candlemas *(blackboard).* When does this feast occur?—Then Mary offered the Christ Child, like a beautiful white Communion candle, to the Lord in the temple.—After Easter, when the springtime begins to stir in nature, there is another feast in Mary's honor—the feast of the **Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin** *(blackboard).* The angel brought to Mary the message: "Thou shalt become the Mother of God!" What joyful tidings! Then it began to be springtime again in the world; for soon the Saviour was to come. —When the fruits have already begun to ripen, in the warm summer-time, we celebrate a fourth feast—the **Assumption of Mary into Heaven** *(blackboard).* When Mary died, she was ripe for Heaven; Jesus took her body and soul into Heaven and crowned her Queen of Heaven.—Finally we have another feast in honor of God's Mother—the feast of the **Nativity of Mary** *(blackboard).* Of all the other Saints (St. John the Baptist alone excepted) we always celebrate the day of their death, never the day of their birth or nativity; for the day of their death is for the Saints the day of their birth for Heaven. But it is different in regard to Mary. Mary's birthday, too, is a day of joy, because she is the Mother of God and she came into the world as pure as a lily. Of course, there are many other festive days in Mary's honor throughout the year; but these are the principal ones.

2. But not all of these feasts are holydays of obligation. For us Catholics in this country only two are holydays of obligation; the feasts of the Immaculate

Conception and of the Assumption of Mary into Heaven. You will notice: I have underlined them on the blackboard.

Write on the blackboard:

Feasts of Mary:

1. *Immaculate Conception* (Dec. 8).
2. Purification of Mary (Candlemas)—Feb. 2.
3. Annunciation of Mary (March 25).
4. *Assumption of Mary* (Aug. 15).
5. Nativity of Mary (Sept. 8).

Synthesis. How many feasts are there in honor of the Blessed Virgin Mary? Which of these are holydays of obligation in our country? Are there any other feasts in honor of Mary in the calendar of the Church? *(Assign the lesson for the next class).*

Application. *What ought we to do on the feastdays of Mary?*—We ought to praise and to love. Praise Mary! She is above all men and angels; for she is God's Mother and Heaven's Queen. Mary herself has prayed in the Holy Ghost: "Magnificat—My soul doth magnify the Lord; for He hath done great things for me and holy is His name!" Then love Mary! She is also the best of mothers and worthy of all love. A true Christian child ought to be also a good child of Mary. Mary helps us to get to Heaven.

Presentation and Explanation.

III. Feasts of the Saints.

1. We also honor many Saints in our Church. In the calendar of the Church each day there is the name of a Saint. But some of these Saints the Church wants to honor in a special manner; hence they have a proper feastday.—Already at the crib of the Christ Child we see a blood red rose blooming—**St. Stephen,** the first martyr *(use the blackboard).* His name-day occurs on the twenty-sixth of December. The next day we honor the beloved disciple of Christ.—**St. John, the**

Evangelist *(blackboard)*, who was permitted to rest his head on the bosom of the Saviour. The following day we celebrate the beautiful feast in honor of the **Holy Innocents** *(blackboard)*, those little children that were martyred by the cruel Herod instead of the Christ Child.—Among the Saints of Heaven there is one, that has a special place of honor. I mean **St. Joseph** *(blackboard)*, the foster-father of Jesus. This Saint has two feastdays: one on the nineteenth of March, and the other on the Wednesday of the second week after Easter.—Then comes the feast of a Saint, of whom Jesus Himself has said, that he is the greatest of all the children of men. This Saint went ahead of Jesus and prepared the way for the Messias into the hearts of men. He is **St. John, the Baptist** *(blackboard)*. We observe this festive day on the twenty-fourth of June. —Five days later (June 29) we celebrate a double feast in honor of the two great princes of the Apostles— **St. Peter and St. Paul** *(blackboard)*.—But there are as many Saints in Heaven as there are stars in the heavens. Who is able to count the many holy martyrs, confessors, virgins, that have already entered into the joys of Heaven in the course of the many hundreds of years from every nation and country and state in life? They cannot all have their turn in the course of the ecclesiastical year; and yet, not one of them should be passed over. Each one of them ought to have a name-day celebration. Therefore we celebrate another feast, when the ecclesiastical year is drawing to a close—the feast of **All Saints** *(blackboard)*.

2. Of all these feasts in honor of God's Saints only one is a holyday of obligation in our country. It is the feast of All Saints, on the first of November. You will notice, I have underlined it on the blackboard.

3. But *why does the Church celebrate these feasts?* —The best answer to this question is given to us by the Saints themselves. Whenever the feastdays of the Lord, of Mary, and the Saints came around in the course of the ecclesiastical year, what do you think the

Saints of God did?—I will tell you. When Christmas approached God's most faithful friends, the Saints, thought of the scene in Bethlehem's stable, and their hearts filled with holy love and warmest gratitude to the Christ Child. When the feast of Mary's Assumption into Heaven came, God's Saints turned their thoughts to that glorious ascent of God's Mother into Heaven amid the songs of joy and welcome of the angels, and the Saints rejoiced with Mary and with the angels. Or at the approach of the double feast of St. Peter and St. Paul, the Saints thought of the holy lives of these two great heroes of God. They remembered the precious reward these two princes of the Apostles are now enjoying in Heaven. That is how the Saints celebrated the feasts of the ecclesiastical year. Every feastday in the Church's calendar was for the Saints an eloquent sermon that called out: "Imitate our example and think of our rewards!" That is the reason why the Church has established feasts. **Holydays were instituted by the Church to recall to our minds the great mysteries of religion and the virtues and rewards of the Saints.** *(Repeat together; use the board).*

4. Now we know the holydays of obligation in the calendar of the Church of our country. Tell me: how must a Christian keep the Sunday holy?—He must worship God by hearing Mass and by abstaining from servile works. You, too, must do the same. On a Sunday you must hear Mass and abstain from servile works! Therefore you know also how a true Christian ought to keep the holydays of obligation.—On a holyday of obligation hear Holy Mass and keep away from servile works! That is what our Holy Mother, the Church, wants. A Christian's duty on a holy day of obligation is the same as on a Sunday.—**We should keep the holydays of obligation as we should keep the Sunday.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

Write on the blackboard:

1. *Feasts of the Saints:*

1. St. Stephen (Dec. 26).
2. St. John, the Evangelist (Dec. 27).
3. Holy Innocents (Dec. 28).
4. St. Joseph (March 19) (Wednesday of second week after Easter).
5. St. John, the Baptist (June 24).
6. St. Peter and St. Paul (June 29).
7. *All Saints* (Nov. 1).

2. Feasts of the Saints—remind us of the great mysteries of religion—of the virtues and rewards of the Saints.

Synthesis. Every good child of the Church ought to know also the chief feasts of the Saints. There are many feasts in honor of the Saints. Which ones have we learned in today's lesson? Which of these is a holyday of obligation? Why were the feasts of the Saints instituted by the Church? How should we keep the holydays of obligation? *(Assign the lesson for the next class).*

Application. *What ought we to do on the holydays of the Saints?*—We ought to rejoice and to imitate. First rejoice! For the Saints belong to our relationship. They are our brothers and sisters, and now they are God's friends in Heaven. That is their greatest honor and good fortune. We, too, ought some day to be as successful as they are. That is what every feastday of the Saints preaches: "You, too, ought to become a Saint!" From Heaven the Saints call into our hearts: "Imitate us! For you, too, there is a place prepared here!" But *can* we become Saints? Yes. We *must* become Saints; for only Saints are in Heaven. Only do not lose courage! The Saints have given us an example; we ought to imitate them. Then we shall also some day be permitted to shine like stars before the throne of God.

LESSON II.

The Christian's Duty on Sundays and Holydays.

Catechetical Unit:

1) Which is the first Commandment of the Church? L. XXXV, Q. 389 (in part).

2) Is it a mortal sin not to hear Mass on a Sunday or a holyday of obligation? L. XXXV, Q. 390.

3) Which is the fifth Commandment of the Church? L. XXXV, Q. 389 (in part).

4) Are we obliged to contribute to the support of our pastors? L. XXXVI, Q. 402.

Preparation. Dear children, the Church speaks to us in Christ's name. She gives us certain Commandments to obey. She has also instituted special holydays. Let us first review this teaching. *(Question the pupils briefly on the foregoing lesson).*—Today we begin the study of these Commandments of the Church. Let us say the first of the chief Commandments of the Church together: **to hear Mass on Sundays and holy days of obligation.** *(Use the blackboard; see the diagram below just above the synthesis).* You have already heard of another Commandment, which tells us to keep a certain day holy to the Lord. Which of the Ten Commandments of God is it?—The first Commandment of the Church, too, speaks of the Sunday; but it also speaks of certain other holydays, called "holydays of obligation." The first Commandment of the Church tells us *how* to keep the Sundays and holydays of obligation holy.

Aim. You already know the main points of the first Commandment of the Church. But I am going to explain to you a little more exactly: *What is the Christian's duty on Sundays and holydays of obligation?* For that is a very important matter.

Presentation. It is a Sunday morning in the country. Everywhere there is rest from labor. Solemn silence

reigns. Soon the bells call the people to the church. From all sides the faithful, clad in their holiday attire, hasten to the Divine services. They who live the farthest from the church are generally the first to arrive. Gradually the house of God is filled. Let us, too, in spirit enter into the church.

The Divine services begin. A solemn High Mass is being celebrated. After the Gospel the priest stops; the sermon takes place. Attentively and devoutly the Christian people listen to the word of God. Many a father's and mother's troubled heart needs consolation from above. The priest's words fall like refreshing dew into the soul. After the sermon all pray together and for one another; for all are like children of one great Christian family. Then the priest continues with the Holy Sacrifice. Filled with reverence and devotion the pious faithful look towards the altar and pray with the priest for God's protection and blessing.

The time for the Offertory has arrived. The faithful offer freely and generously money for the support of the priest, for the upkeep of the church and the school, for the poor of the parish, and for the missions. These offerings are placed before the altar. The poor as well as the rich make their offerings; yes, even the little children contribute their pennies.

Of course, not all are as zealous and generous as these good people. During the Divine services some careless young men are seated in the nearby stores and places of amusement. They are spending their time laughing at and making fun of going to church and ridiculing those pious men and women, who are praying in the church. Others come too late for Holy Mass, at the Gospel or perhaps only at the Consecration. And how lazily and distracted they stand there! One can see at a glance that they feel bored. To while away the time they gaze curiously at the people and make unkind jokes about them. Even among the children we see several that do not know at all where they

are. Some of them talk and laugh with each other, exchange pictures and books, and continually gaze about with idle curiosity. Their thoughts are everywhere except with God and in the church. "If only the services were over!" they say to one another. But let us leave these wicked children to themselves; God certainly will punish them some day. Let us now look around a little in the village.

Not all the people have come to the services; some have remained at home. We are just a bit curious to know why they stay away. Let us go into the nearest house. In the room we meet a mother with several little children. The older ones the mother has sent away, saying: "Children, go to church and be good! Gladly would I go along with you, but I must stay at home with the little ones. Pray for me, too!" Not far from here lies a sick father; he cannot rise from his sick bed. His good daughter is with him, and is nursing him with childlike love. A short distance outside the village is a large farm. Father and mother and children have gone to the church; only one servant is at home. He must watch the house. Out still farther in the country there is a single, poor little cottage. Before this house an old grandmother is seated on a bench. That good soul would like so very much to be with her dear Lord in the church; for going to church was always a delight to her good heart. But now that is no longer possible. She is too weak and can no longer cover the distance to the church. Now she holds a large prayer-book on her lap, and is reading the Mass prayers at home. And when the bell tolls at the Consecration, she kneels down and adores the Saviour in the distance.

Now the Divine services are over. The people are coming out of the church. Many of them go to the cemetery about the church, to pay a visit to the graves of their dear ones and to sprinkle Holy Water over the little mounds. Then they turn their steps homewards, strengthened for a whole week. But the entire Sunday

belongs to the dear Lord. Therefore most of these pious Christians come again to the church in the afternoon or the evening to recite the Rosary and assist at the Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament. For they think to themselves: "The Sunday belongs to God; and for a whole week one needs much blessing from God too." The whole Sunday is for them a holyday of the Lord.

Explanation. 1. a) These are exemplary Christians. God must be pleased with them. For a true Christian the Sunday is, as it were, a part of his flesh and blood. He is drawn by force to the church. Then his heart opens up to the dear Lord, just as the flower opens its chalice of blossoms to the morning sun. These good persons would not have felt right at all without Holy Mass. They knew very well: *To hear Mass,* that makes the Sunday to be really a Sunday and a holyday a real holyday; for Holy Mass is the greatest and the best, that we can give to God. They thought to themselves: "Whoever does not go to Holy Mass on a Sunday or holyday of obligation, will not have God's blessing upon his work on a week day either." Everything depends on God's blessing.

But it is not enough to be present at Holy Mass; *to be devout at Holy Mass,* that is the main thing. Therefore to look attentively towards the altar, not to gaze about curiously as those children—that is right and proper; for on the altar is Jesus, the All Holy One. To behave reverently, not to talk and laugh—that is fitting; for the church is a holy place. To pray devoutly, not to allow one's thoughts to wander on all sorts of things—that is proper. To assist at the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass with due attention, reverence and devotion, that is what God demands, and that is what the Church wishes. But do not forget, that such must be your conduct on *all* Sundays and holydays of obligation.—*By the first Commandment of the Church we are commanded to assist, on all Sundays and holydays of obligation, at the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass with*

due attention, reverence and devotion. (Repeat together).

b) Holy Mass is the kernel, or heart, of the Sunday. A Sunday without Holy Mass is no true day of the Lord. But a pious Christian will do more than that; he will do as did the pious Christian country people of our story. He will also be present at the *sermon.* For the sermon is really the food of the soul and we need it very much. Whoever does not like to listen to a sermon, has not much of the spirit of God and of the true Christian. For such a one the words of Christ are true: "He that is of God heareth the words of God" (John viii, 47). To be sure, the hearing of a sermon is not as strict an obligation as the hearing of Holy Mass.—But whoever has the right kind of zeal for God's honor and for the welfare of his soul, will not be satisfied with merely hearing Mass. What will his zeal urge him to do in addition?—He will also go to church in the afternoon or the evening, and say the Rosary, or assist at the Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament, or practice some other private religious devotions. Whoever does that has the genuine Christion spirit. That is what our Holy Mother, the Church, desires.—*Zeal for the honor of God and for the welfare of our own souls ought to urge us also to assist at the other Divine services, especially at the sermon, on Sundays and holydays of obligation. (Repeat together).*

2. The Sunday Mass is a strict duty. But not every one that absents himself from Mass, is guilty of sin. Just judge now for yourselves! In the first place we heard of a mother in our story; several little children were with her at home. Did those children commit sin?—Little children of three and four years of age do not understand anything about Holy Mass as yet; they like to disturb the Divine services. Therefore they do not have to go to church. But a five year old child a mother can at times take with her to the church. And even though the child only folds its hands piously and looks towards the altar, that is already an act of

religion and Jesus will bless such a child. But when a child gets to be seven and eight years old, it is already intelligent enough to go to church; it knows, that the church is God's house, and that there it must be good and must pray. Such a child can use its reason sufficiently; it has, therefore, arrived at the use of its reason. Therefore it is obliged to assist at Holy Mass. But you are strictly obliged; and if one of you does not want to hear Mass, such a one commits a mortal sin.—Remember therefore: *All who have sufficiently attained the use of reason (which is generally the case about the age of seven years) are strictly bound to hear Mass on Sundays and holydays of obligation. For such persons:* **It is a mortal sin not to hear Mass on a Sunday or a holy day of obligation.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

3. a) Now tell me: did the mother of our story commit a sin?—One cannot leave the little children all alone at home. Therefore the mother is without guilt. To take care of little children is a serious reason or excuse, which excuses one from hearing Mass. What do you think of that sick father of our story?—He cannot go to church. Necessity knows no law. Sickness is a serious reason, that excuses. The daughter of that man nursed him; did she sin?—Nursing the sick excuses from the duty of hearing Mass. The hired man of our story had to watch the house.—That is also a serious excuse. What do you think of that old grandmother?—To go to church would have pleased her much more than to stay at home; she certainly did not commit sin. You see, those are serious reasons, which excuse from hearing Mass.—Our Catechism says: **It is a mortal sin not to hear Mass on a Sunday or a holyday of obligation, unless we are excused for a serious reason.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

b) Now let us suppose, that among those little children of our story, that were at home with their mother, there were one or two children over seven years old, that wanted to go to Mass, but their father forbade

them, simply because he himself did not care to go. Or suppose, that the mother of that family was careless about going to church; and she did not call the children in time, or get them dressed properly. Would that father and that mother be guilty of sin?—Yes indeed; both of them would have committed sin. Why? —Because they, having others under their charge, hindered them from hearing Mass through their own fault, without a sufficient reason. Or here is a certain employer, that has Catholics working for him. He is a careless Catholic himself, and is only thinking about making as much money as he can. Therefore he hinders his Catholic help from assisting at Mass. Is he guilty of mortal sin?—He certainly sins. Our Catechism says: **They also commit mortal sin who, having others under their charge, hinder them from hearing Mass, without a sufficient reason.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

4. But there are also Christians, who *remain away entirely from Holy Mass* without any excuse at all. Some of them were in the stores and places of amusement, while Divine services were going on. What do you say to that?—They are desecrators of the Sunday. Whoever does not want to have anything to do with Holy Mass, with such a one our Blessed Lord will be unwilling to have anything to do either. Such a careless sinner says, as it were, to Jesus: "I do not need Thy graces!" How impudent and ungrateful! What will Jesus say some day?—Several young men came to church too late through their own fault. The former class committed a venial sin; those that came just before Consecration were guilty of a mortal sin, because *they omitted one of the principal parts of the Mass* (namely the Offertory). But they have, moreover, a second sin on their consciences.—They behaved badly during the Divine services. The devil blessed them for such conduct. It would have been almost better, if they had remained outside the church. What do you think of those children of our story?—To be voluntarily dis-

tracted during Holy Mass, to talk, to laugh, to gaze about curiously, or otherwise to behave irreverently in Holy Mass is also a sin. Such children do not give honor to God, but rather disgrace Him. Do not forget, therefore: *We sin against the first Commandment of the Church: 1. when, through our own fault, we lose Mass either entirely or a principal part of it; 2. when during Mass we give way to voluntary distractions, look about through curiosity, talk, laugh, or otherwise behave irreverently. (Repeat together).*

5. Now just one more important matter. Tell me: What did those pious Christian country people do during the Offertory of the Mass?—Yes, while the priest was offering up the bread and the wine, the faithful also made an offering to God. They contributed money, according to their means, for the support of their pastor, for the upkeep of the church and the school, for the maintenance of the missions, and other pious, religious purposes. Even the little children offered their pennies. That is right. That is a grave duty. The Church commands us to support our pastors, and to bear our share in the expenses of the Church and school. Therefore she has given us the fifth Commandment of the Church. The fifth Commandment of the Church is: **to contribute to the support of our pastors.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).* **We are obliged to contribute to the support of our pastors, and to bear our share in the expenses of the Church and the school.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).* St. Paul says: "So the Lord ordained, that they who preach the Gospel would live by the Gospel" (I Cor. ix, 12s). In the Old Testament God commanded the Jews to give tithes and offerings for the support of the priesthood and the upkeep of Divine worship. This has also been a most sacred duty from the very beginning of the New Testament. You remember what the early Christians did from the story of Ananias and Saphira. "As many as were owners of lands or houses sold them and brought the price of the things they sold, and laid it

down before the feet of the Apostles" (Acts of Ap. iv, 34s). Dear children, never be stingy with God and the Church. Give liberally according to your means, and God will bless you abundantly.

Write on the blackboard:

1. "To hear Mass on Sundays and Holydays of obligation!"
2. Sins—
   - to miss Mass on such days without a serious reason—a mortal sin.
   - to hinder others under our charge from hearing Mass, without sufficient reason.
3. "To contribute to the support of our pastors!"
4. Duties—to support our pastors—to bear our share in the expenses of Church and school.

Synthesis. To hear Mass on Sundays and holydays of obligation, that is a serious duty of conscience. What is the first Commandment of the Church? What else ought we to do on such days? How must we keep the holydays of obligation? Which are the holydays of obligation in this country? Who is obliged to hear Mass on Sundays and holydays of obligation? What kind of a sin is it to miss Mass on such days through one's own fault? Who are excused from this duty? How can parents and superiors sin in this regard? How else is it possible to break the first Commandment of the Church? Is it possible to miss Mass, even though one is actually present in body? Which is the fifth Commandment of the Church? What does it command? Is it a serious sin to break the fifth Commandment of the Church? *(Have the children read the answers from the Catechism. Assign the lesson for the next class).*

Application. 1. There are serious reasons, which excuse from Holy Mass; but also insufficient or invalid excuses. I leave you to judge for yourselves.—A child

says: "I must go on an errand for mother." That is perfectly right; but you can go either before Mass or after Mass. Another person says: "I must work." First do God's work, then man's work. "I cannot go to church." Why not? "I have to walk several miles and the weather is very bad." That is a sufficient reason.—A child excuses itself, saying: "I was not at Mass." Why not? "Because it rained." That is a lazy excuse! Another child says: "I was cold." But if you were to receive a dollar, it would not be too cold for you, would it? "We are going on an excursion on Sunday." First go to church, then go out for a pleasure trip! "I say the Mass prayers at home on Sundays."—"I say the Rosary instead of going to Mass"—"I have no good clothes." If that is true, you are not guilty of sin.—In places where there are several Masses the people take turns, so that every one gets to Mass.—Can I give permission to a child to miss Mass? —I cannot, for that is a Commandment of the Church. I can only say, whether a child has a sufficient reason or not.

2. Fulfil your Sunday obligation conscientiously! A Sunday without Holy Mass is followed by a week without God's blessing. As is your Sunday, so will be the day of your death. Always be reverent at Holy Mass; the Divine Child Jesus ought to be your model! Why do you go to church? You want to please God. Do not displease Him by your bad conduct! By talking in church you rob: 1. God of His honor; 2. the angels of their joy; 3. yourselves of blessing; 4. the Poor Souls of help; 5. your fellowmen of devotion, and 6. you are preparing yourself for a long and painful Purgatory.

3. The priests labor for our benefit; therefore they are entitled to support from our offerings. "The laborer is worthy of his hire," says our Blessed Saviour (Luke x, 7). But when you give to the collection for the support of the pastor and the upkeep of the Church and school, do not give to receive the praise of men.

Do it to please God. On a certain occasion when Jesus was in the court of the Temple, He seated Himself just opposite the three great coffers in which all offerings for the services of the Temple were deposited. He noticed a crowd of wealthy Jews cast in their beautiful gifts with all the show and pride imaginable. Just behind them a poor widow stole up to the box and dropped in her treasure—two small brass mites, the smallest coin current among the Jews. "It was all her living," and Jesus knew it. Calling His disciples, the Saviour pointed out the humble soul to them. "In truth," He said, "this poor widow has given more than all the others; for they, indeed, have put but a portion from their over-abundance into the treasury, while she, out of her poverty, has given all that she has, even her whole living." What an example this poor widow is for all! Let us imitate her generosity, but above all things let us avoid the pride and show of the vain Jews.

LESSON III.

Fast and Abstinence.

Catechetical Unit:

1) Which is the second Commandment of the Church? L. XXXV, Q. 389 (in part).

2) What do you mean by the fast-days? L. XXXV, Q. 393.

3) What do you mean by the days of abstinence? L. XXXV, Q. 394.

Preparation. Dear children, in the last lesson we learned how a true Christian ought to keep the Sundays and holydays of obligation. Let us first review this teaching. *(Question the pupils briefly on the foregoing lesson).*—We now come to the second Commandment of the Church. Let us say it together. The second Commandment of the Church is: **to fast and ab-**

stain on the days appointed. *(Use the blackboard; see the diagram below just above the synthesis).* Who of you has already fasted?—You all have already heard of fasting in the Bible History. Moses remained on Mount Sinai for forty days and forty nights without food and drink. St. John the Baptist kept a long and strict fast in the desert. With what did he nourish himself?—What do you know of the fast of Jesus?—Therefore to eat nothing, or to eat only a little,—that is fasting. What are you not allowed to do on Fridays?—You must keep away from flesh-meat. You must abstain.

Aim. First I am going to explain to you a little more in detail *what is meant by fasting and abstaining.* Then I shall also tell you *who is obliged to observe the law of fast and of abstinence.*

Presentation. It just happens to be Friday in Lent—a day of fast and abstinence. Let us visit a Christian family. We shall see, whether all keep the Commandment of fasting and of abstaining in the proper Christian manner.

The father of the family is a good, honest blacksmith. Early and late he is at work, and busily hammers away at the anvil; for he must work diligently, in order to earn the daily bread for his children. In his house meat never comes on the table on Friday. "For that would be a disgrace for a Christian house and a sin in the sight of the Lord God!" Before and after meals, too, all recite the prayers together. That is a good old Christian custom. But before the father goes to work in the morning, he eats a good big breakfast; and when he stops work in the evening, he enjoys a good supper. About nine and again at three o'clock he also, as usual, takes a lunch.

The mother, too, is a pious Christian woman. The house-work keeps her busy, it is true; but, in spite of that, she keeps the fast very conscientiously. In the morning she takes a little bread and coffee, at noon

a full meal; in the evening a plate of soup, an egg and a little bread. "That is enough," she says; "I can stand that well enough. For by doing that I shall receive God's blessing in my house!"

The oldest son of the family is already sixteen years of age and is allowed to go to high school. He gets on well enough with his studies, but in regard to fasting things go very badly. He is hungry the whole live-long day, and his mother can scarcely cook enough for him. His three younger sisters go to school. But they do not think of fasting at all, and enjoy their lunch during the recess at ten o'clock. They can hardly wait until noon comes, saying: "Today we are going to get a fast-day meal!" and that is their favorite food.

The father has also a helper, or an apprentice, working for him; for he could not do the work alone. But this helper does not like fast-day food at all. No day of the week is more distasteful to him than the Friday. But he knows how to help himself: in the evening he goes to the restaurant and eats meat and enjoys himself.

There is one more in the family, the old grandfather. He cannot, of course, stand the fast-day food any longer; he has a weak stomach. At Easter-time he complained of his affliction to his pastor; and the priest allowed him to eat meat on Fridays. He was heartily glad and thankful for that. Therefore every Friday he goes to church and prays the Stations of the Cross. "For the Friday is, of course, the day of Christ's death and, therefore, for me it is a day of penance."

Explanation. 1. Now pay attention! Let us first look at the mother. She satisfied her appetite only once, and that at noon. She ate only one full meal. That is allowed. In the morning and in the evening she also took a little lunch, in order to keep her strength. That is not forbidden. For the Church knows very well, that we are weak human beings; and

fasting is a hard matter for us. Therefore the Church is a kind mother and allows us to take a little nourishment in the morning and the evening. Now you know what fast-days are: **By fast-days I mean the days on which we are allowed but one full meal.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).* We are not permitted to take this full meal before noon. However, if it is more convenient for us, we may enjoy this full meal in the evening instead of at noon.

But *how much* may we take at the meals in the morning and in the evening?—I am now speaking of those two meals outside of the one full meal. For supper we are permitted to take about one half of what we usually eat in the morning. For breakfast we may take a cup of coffee, or cocoa, or tea, or milk, and a piece of bread. That is right in the sight of God and of the Church. During the day, outside of meal-time, one is not allowed to eat. Therefore "to take a lunch at nine or at three o'clock" is not allowed; that would be a sin. But hold! I have a doubt. What about drinking?—An old proverb says: "Drinking does not break the fast." Of course, a Christian ought to be temperate and moderate in drink, and that especially on fast-days. For a true Christian does all things reasonably and for the honor of God.

2. Let us continue. It is Friday. What sort of food do we find in that family?—There we see only fast-day food, but not any meat. That is what the father wants. That is also the Church's will. This keeping one's self from flesh-meat—this abstaining from flesh-meat—is called abstinence. Now you understand what is meant by days of abstinence: **By days of abstinence I mean days on which we are forbidden to eat flesh-meat, but are allowed the usual number of meals.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).* Now you understand what is meant by the second Commandment of the Church: to fast and abstain on the days appointed.

(Formerly this abstinence from flesh-meat used to be much stricter. In the early days the Christians abstained from everything that came from animals; hence they would not eat eggs, nor drink milk, nor partake of anything made from butter or lard. They used to prepare their meals with oil. But now things are much easier. We are allowed to prepare our meals with lard, the fat of animals (drippings). But I have already often eaten meat on Fridays—One may eat fish, lobsters, froglegs, oysters; also snails, if one likes them. Remember then: All meat from cold blooded animals is permitted; but the meat from warm blooded animals is forbidden).

Now just one more thing! Children and even adults generally say: "Today is a fast day!" Is that right? You ought not to mix up fast days with days of abstinence. On fast-days one may eat only one full meal; on days of abstinence one may not eat any flesh-meat, although the usual number of meals is allowed. Do not forget this important distinction.

3. Now let us see whether all in that family have acted in the right manner. Let us begin with the children. They do not bother at all about fasting, and they enjoy their lunch at school very much. The older son, too, does not think of fasting, but rather his thoughts are continually occupied with eating. Do they commit sin?—They need not have any fear; none of them is guilty of sin. The duty of fasting only commences when a person has completed his twenty-first year, and it ceases with the beginning of one's sixtieth birthday. You all are still free from this obligation; the old grandfather, too, is excused.—But why does not the Church as yet demand fasting of you?—Young people have great hunger and cannot fast too much. They may eat, in order that they may grow big and strong. The Church is really a very solicitous mother; she does not want to harm or hurt anyone; she wishes to do good to all of her children.

Now let us hear what follows! The father observes the Friday but not the obligation of fasting. Already in the morning he eats a big breakfast and again in the evening he enjoys a full meal. Moreover, he is careful to eat his regular lunch. What do you say to that?—Whoever must work hard, must also eat heartily; otherwise such a one cannot stand it. The father is free from the duty of fasting; for hard work is a sufficient reason, that excuses.—Now the father happens to get sick. But thanks be to God! he soon gets better. Of course, he is still very weak. The doctor said, that he ought to eat and drink heartily, so that he might get his strength back again. What do you think of that?—The father may, indeed, eat whatever he likes, so that he may be able to work soon again for his children and earn some money; therefore he does not sin. Sick persons and those that are just getting over a sickness, or as we say, convalescing, are not obliged to fast. Sickness is a valid reason, that excuses from fasting.—Let us remember that: *Every Christian who has completed his twenty-first year, and is not excused by a just cause, is obliged to fast. (Repeat together).* Who then is excused from fasting?—*The convalescent, those who have completed their fifty-ninth year, and those who either have to work hard, or would by fasting be prevented from properly discharging the duties of their calling. (Repeat together).* Why did the mother observe the duty of fasting?—

4. In regard to the duty of abstinence matters are a little different. All in the family must keep the Friday; the father demands it. That is right and pleases me; for it is a matter of conscience. Could perhaps the father, or the mother, permit the children to eat meat?—No; the Church forbids that. The mother may not give the children any flesh-meat and the children may not eat any. Every child from the seventh year of its age must observe the Friday; then the duty of abstinence begins. But did not the helper, or apprentice eat flesh-meat?—Thereby he committed a mortal

sin; for the Church commands the Friday-abstinence most strictly.

Of course, here again the Church is a kind mother. Just suppose, that one of the children gets sick. The doctor orders soup in which meat has been cooked for that child, and also a little piece of soft meat.—The child may eat it in peace; it is not a sin. Sickness is a valid reason, that excuses from the duty of abstinence. —After the meal a beggar comes and has a great hunger. But the children have left nothing except a little piece of meat from yesterday's meal. The mother gives that to the poor man. "Thank you a thousand times," he says; "may the Lord reward you!" Does he sin?—God surely will not impute that to him as a sin. Poverty is a valid reason, that excuses from the law of abstinence.—Therefore, let us remember: *All Christians are bound to abstain from flesh-meat, who have attained the age of seven years, unless a just cause, such as illness, poverty, etc., excuse them from it. (Repeat together).*—But suppose a person cannot observe the duty of abstinence?—In that case he ought to do as the old grandfather did: *He must apply to the pastor for a dispensation and perform other good works instead. (Repeat together).*

Write on the blackboard:

1. "To fast and abstain on the days appointed!"
2. Fasting—eating but one full meal a day (fast-days).
3. Abstaining—eating no flesh-meat (days of abstinence).

Synthesis. Now you know the ecclesiastical Commandment of fasting and abstaining. What you have learned today you ought to retain well in your memory. Which is the second Commandment of the Church? What do you mean by fasting? Are you allowed to eat anything else besides one full meal on a fast-day? How much may one eat in the morning? in the even-

ing? When may you take the one full meal? What do you mean by abstinence? Who is obliged to keep the fastdays? Who is obliged to observe the days of abstinence? What reasons excuse from the duty of fasting? of abstinence? What are those persons to do, who cannot abstain from the use of flesh-meat? What is the difference between fasting and abstinence? *(Have the children read the answers from the Catechism. Assign the lesson for the next class).*

Application. 1. Now I am going to see whether you have understood everything correctly.—It is a *fast-day.* A young man, who is thoroughly sound and healthy, and does little work, eats a full meal at noon, and in the evening he takes his regular share of tea. "But I must first eat properly," he says, "otherwise I cannot enjoy my tea." What do you say to that?—He commits a sin. He is obliged to fast; that is healthy for his soul and for his body. May this man eat meat in the evening?—At another time he eats on a fast-day at nine o'clock a piece of bread and cheese and at three o'clock he drinks a glass of milk. What do you think of that?—May he drink tea or coffee at three o'clock? —A child says in confession: "I have not kept the fast-days: I have taken two or three full meals."—

2. But listen again! It is a *day of abstinence.* A child accuses itself in confession, saying: "I have always eaten meat on Fridays." Why?—"Because my mother gave it to me."—A child at home gets flesh-meat and fast-day food set before it. What ought it to do?—A person says: "I must have my soup with meat cooked in it; I am used to that."—A workman eats flesh-meat every Friday. Why?—"I have to work hard."—He is free from the duty of fasting, but not from the obligation of abstinence.—A servant maid was once enjoying a sausage on a Friday. Her mistress said: "But you may not eat meat today!" The foolish maid answered: "Why! it is only sausage."— A man eats flesh-meat for dinner at home; in the evening he goes out for supper and eats meat in the res-

taurant.—A child eats a very little piece of meat.—Even though it is only a little sin, it is, nevertheless, a big disgrace.—A mother says: "I cannot stand fast-day food; it gives me stomach trouble." What should she do?—A servant maid gets only flesh-meat for her meals from the lady she is working for.—Her mistress must answer for that to God. A young man must eat in the restaurant; there one can only get flesh-meat at one's meals.—He is excused.—A child gets a little meat given it on a Friday.—Another child gets a piece of sausage from the butcher for itself.—A third child steals some meat. A double sin!

3. Wicked people say: "The Church has invented fasting and abstaining!" That is a lie. Fasting is from the dear Lord Himself. Already our first parents received the Commandment of abstinence in Paradise. The Jews, too, have a strict Commandment of abstinence and fasting. And they observed it most carefully too. What a disgrace, if a Christian is unwilling to fast! But there are people who want to eat and drink the live-long day; otherwise they claim that they would not be able to stand it. To eat and drink well, they say, is the chief thing. Yes, that is the chief thing for people, whose god is their belly, but it is only a secondary matter for a true Christian. We live not to eat, but we eat to live. Jesus said: "Not in bread alone doth man live, but in every word that proceedeth from the mouth of God" (Matt. iv, 4). What does He mean?—Man does not need food for the body only, but above all things food for the soul. He ought to be solicitous for that and not be thinking always of eating. I am afraid, that such a person, that is never filled, will have a hard time of it in the other world.

4. Have you hitherto always observed the duty of abstinence conscientiously?—God knows it. If you have failed through your own fault, do better from now on. If you have eaten meat through no fault of your own, you are without sin. What then ought you to do?—You can do as a certain good boy once did. Meat was

set before him every Friday. Once he said to his father: "Dear father, today I will not eat my meat." "Why?" asked his father. The boy replied: "Today is Friday. The Church forbids the use of flesh-meat today, because Jesus died for us on the Cross on a Friday." From that time on the boy received fast-day food every Friday.

(Just listen to how a king observed the Friday! Louis XVI of France lay in prison. It was Friday and they gave him only flesh-meat to eat. Would he have been allowed to eat it?—But he did not do it. He left it all stand untouched; smiling, he took a piece of bread and dipped it into water and said: "That is my meal today!" Do you see? He was a king and yet, an obedient son of the Church. You, too, be obedient children of holy Mother Church, and you will also be good children of God).

LESSON IV.

Days of Fast—Days of Abstinence.

(Supplementary).

Catechetical Unit:

1) Which are the fast-days?

2) Which are the days of abstinence?

Preparation. Dear children, in the early days of the Christian Church the practice of fast and abstinence was much more severe than it is at present. In those days the Christians used to fast the entire day until after vespers, that is, until about five o'clock in the afternoon. Therefore St. Bernard once said to his brethren, members of a religious order: "All fast now until evening, kings and princes, the clergy and the people, the distinguished and the common folk, the rich and the poor." But later on because of the weakness of her children the Church permitted a

milder practice to come into vogue. She obliged her children to fast only until noon, and she permitted them to eat a collation, that is, a light meal, in the evening. What a disregard and contempt would it not be of the Church and of our own salvation, if we were not prepared to obey the Church's commands in regard to fasting! But let us first review the lesson on the second Commandment of the Church. *(Question the pupils briefly on the foregoing lesson).*—The second Commandment of the Church is twofold: it refers to the duty of fasting and to the duty of abstaining. Therefore there are days of fast and days of abstinence.

Aim. We must now ask the further questions: *1. When are the fast days? 2. When are the days of abstinence?* These two questions we shall answer today. Let us make a little journey together through the ecclesiastical year.

Presentation and Explanation.

1. Scarcely has the ecclesiastical year begun, when fasting, too, commences. It is Advent. We are expecting and preparing our hearts for the Christ Child. This season of expectation is a holy time of penance. Therefore in the early Christian days, and until quite recently, the Church commanded her children to observe two days each week as days of fast—Wednesday and Friday of Advent. We might for short call this "the little fast of Advent." But how did this little fast arise? I must explain that briefly to you.

The early Christians were very pious people. They always prepared themselves with great zeal, especially for the solemn feasts. Already on the evenings before the solemn feasts they were accustomed to come to the church and to keep the night watches by prayers and songs and fastings. These night watches were called *"vigils."* The Christians knew very well the beautiful words of the Archangel Raphael: "Prayer is good with fasting and alms, more than to lay up treasures

of gold" (Tob. xii, 8). But gradually the Christians began to relax in their pious zeal. Then the Church herself did away with the vigils. Only one has remained until the present day—the vigil of the holy feast of Christmas. The fast, too, on the vigils was changed. At the present time there are only four vigils left, on which we are bound to fast and abstain. They are: the vigils of Christmas, of Pentecost, of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and of All Saints. All the other vigils were transferred to the season of Advent (namely the Wednesdays and Fridays of Advent). That is how the practice of "the little fast of Advent" arose. But now even these fast days are no longer commanded by the Church.—Let us remember then: *Days of fast and abstinence are the vigils of Christmas, Pentecost, the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin, and All Saints. (Repeat together; use the blackboard; see the diagram below just above the synthesis).*

2. In the Advent season there also occurs the first of the *Ember-days fast.* The Ember-time really means a period, that recurs regularly each of the four seasons. It occurs at the beginning of the four seasons: the winter Ember-days after the third Sunday of Advent, the spring Ember-days after the first Sunday of Lent, the summer Ember-days after Pentecost Sunday, the autumn Ember-days after the Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross (Sept. 14). The Ember-days are always on Wednesday, Friday and Saturday. On these days there is a double fast, namely the regular fast and the duty of abstinence. Let us remember, therefore: *The Ember-days are days of fast and of abstinence. (Repeat together; use the blackboard).* The Ember-days are marked in every good Catholic Calendar; the priest, too, always announces these days from the pulpit. Look in the calendar, when you get home, mark them with a pencil, and call your mother's attention to them.

You would like to know, too, why we keep the fast and abstinence of the Ember-time.—The Church wants us *to do penance, to give thanks* and *to pray*. We ought, first, *to do penance* for all our intemperance. Do not say: "I have no sins." Do you know what St. Paul once said: "Whether you eat or drink, or whatever else you do, do all for the glory of God" (I Cor. x, 31). Have you always acted like that? Or were you not oftentimes like the dumb animals, that only satisfied their appetites? Have you nothing at all to do penance for? —Secondly we ought *to thank God* for all His gifts, particularly for food and drink. In God's sight we all are really nothing else but beggars. If the good Lord did not perform over and over again every year the miracle of the multiplication of bread out in the fields, what would happen to us? The wealthiest man would have to starve to death beside his money bags.—In the third place we ought *to pray*, especially for good, worthy priests. That is what the Church wants. The Lord Jesus once said: "The harvest indeed is great; but the laborers are few. Pray ye therefore the Lord of the vineyard, that He send laborers into His vineyard" (Matt. ix, 39). The vineyard is the Catholic Church, the laborers are the Bishops and the priests. —We ought to do penance, to thank and to pray; therefore we observe the fast and the abstinence of the Ember-time.

3. After Christmas we enjoy a little vacation from fasting. But then gradually a great day of penance approaches.—*Ash Wednesday* with its double fast. The spirit of penance and mourning now enters into the Church and into every true Christian heart; the great fast now begins and lasts for forty days. Remember, therefore: *All the days of Lent, except the Sundays, are days of fast; but Ash Wednesday together with the Fridays and the Saturdays of Lent are days of fast and of abstinence. (Repeat together; use the blackboard).* In certain dioceses the Pope by special permission sometimes allows Catholics to observe the

Wednesdays instead of the Saturdays of Lent as days of fast and abstinence. The priest usually announces this duty and explains it carefully to the people just at the beginning of Lent.

But why do we observe this great fast?—Christ Himself has given us the example; He fasted for forty days and forty nights. A Christian must imitate his Divine Master; therefore we observe the great fast. During this holy penitential season we ought again and again to think of Christ's sufferings. The bitter sufferings of the Lord ought to be our daily bread, as it were, during the holy season of Lent. We conclude the great fast by the two great days of penance—Good Friday and Holy Saturday. Then Christ offered Himself on the Cross for our sakes. Therefore we, too, make a sacrifice and observe special penance and self-denial during the final days of the Lenten period. Then we can sing a joyous and blessed Alleluja on Easter morning. The Lenten fast ends at noon on Holy Saturday.

4. The great period of fast is over. But fasting and abstaining never cease altogether during the whole ecclesiastical year; for the life of a Christian ought to be a life of sacrifice. The Church reminds us of that every week; therefore she imposes upon us the *Friday* abstinence. That lasts throughout the entire year. Only when a holyday of obligation falls on a Friday may we eat meat. For the Friday is the day of Christ's death; therefore it is for us Christians a day of abstinence. Remember, then: *All Fridays of the year are days of abstinence. (Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

5. We have gone through the ecclesiastical year, and have learned the days of fast and the days of abstinence. There are two great exceptions, which I want you to remember especially. All the Sundays of the year are free days—that is, we are not bound to fast or to abstain on the Sundays. Then again, whenever

a holyday of obligation falls on a Friday, we are not obliged to observe the law of abstinence. *Exceptions to the law of fast and abstinence are 1. all the Sundays of the year and 2. whenever a holyday of obligation falls on a Friday. (Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

Write on the blackboard:

1. *Days of fast and abstinence:*
   a) Vigils of Christmas, Pentecost, Assumption of the Bl. Virgin, All Saints;
   b) Ember-days (four seasons);
   c) Ash Wednesday—Fridays and Saturdays of Lent.
2. *Days of fast only:*
   All the other week days of Lent.
3. *Days of abstinence only:*
   All Fridays of the year.
4. Exceptions to law of fast and abstinence:
   a) all Sundays;
   b) whenever a holyday of obligation falls on a Friday.

Synthesis. Which are the days of fast and of abstinance? What do you understand by vigils? What is the meaning of Ember-time? On what day does Lent begin? Which days of Lent are days of fast and abstinence? Which of the days of Lent are only days of fast? What are we obliged to do on all Fridays of the year? Are there any exceptions to the law of fast and of abstinence? Why do we do penance during Lent? Why do we abstain on Fridays? *(Assign the lesson for the next class).*

Application. Now just a few more examples! Christmas falls on a Friday.—It is Holy Saturday at noon. Are we allowed to eat meat for dinner and for supper?—It is the vigil of Corpus Christi. Are we obliged to fast and abstain?—A person goes to con-

fession and says: "I have kept the principal fastdays." He means the Ember-days, Ash Wednesday and the last days of Holy Week.—Does the Friday hold only for other people? I would not like to be that man at the hour of death; I would be afraid of the Lord God. That man will have to keep his Fridays later on. I would prefer to fast now of my own free will than later on to be obliged to fast against my will. What does it matter, even though fasting and abstaining do hurt a little now? When we get to Heaven, there will not be any more fastdays. There there are only days of rejoicing: pure joy without suffering for all eternity!

LESSON V.

Why We Fast and Abstain.

Catechetical Unit:

1) Why does the Church command us to fast and abstain? L. XXXV, Q. 395.

2) Why does the Church command us to abstain from flesh-meat on Fridays? L. XXXV, Q. 396.

Preparation. Dear children, every good Catholic child ought to know the days of the ecclesiastical year, on which the law of fast and abstinence binds. Let us review this teaching. *(Question the pupils briefly on the preceding lesson).*—The Church demands fasting. And yet there are people, who do not want to fast at all. They say: "What good is fasting?" However, fasting is not a vain thing. You already know why we observe the Friday abstinence. We do it out of love for Jesus; for Friday is the date of Christ's death. Why do we observe the great fast?—The Lenten season is a time of penance. Why do we observe the Ember-days?—You see, then, that there are reasons for fasting and abstaining.

Aim. That is what I want to show you even more exactly: *Why do we fast and abstain?* But first I shall tell you about the fasting of the early Christians.

Presentation. Like Christ, the Divine Master, so too the early Christians fasted zealously. They knew very well, that the true Christian must imitate Christ. Jesus Himself has said so: "Whoever does not carry his cross and follow Me, cannot be My disciple." (Luke xiv, 27). The Christians kept a strict fast especially before Easter. Then they were accustomed to eat only once a day, and that after the vesper hour, that is, late in the afternoon, or not until the evening after sundown. And even then their meal was not rich and plentiful; no, they did not partake of any meat, and neither did they drink any wine. Most of them took only bread and salt and a little portion of vegetables; that was the whole meal. These Christians were indeed very pious people; they looked upon fasting as something serious. But when the great week of mourning came, Holy Week, they doubled their zeal for fasting. Good Friday was for them a great day of fast. Then most of them neither ate nor drank anything until Holy Saturday. Many even abstained from all food and drink for two or three days. Yes, some even went further and did not take a bite of anything during the entire Holy week until Easter morning. That was indeed a great fast, and to do that required a very great spirit of holy Christian zeal. Most of them probably found this long fast very difficult. However, they thought to themselves: "Now is the time for penance. We have sinned; we wish to do penance for our sins. Let the body become weak; for then the soul will become strong and can more easily conquer all evil inclinations." But when the great period of penance was

Appli[illegible]y could sing all the more joyfully a jubilant mas falls" [illegible] and "Praised be the Lord! Thanks to the Are we allo[illegible] is arisen!"

per?—It is t[illegible] 1. We must admire this strict fast of obliged to fast [illegible]ians. How must not our present day

Christians feel ashamed when they recall what the early Christians did! Now fasting is much easier, and yet, for most people it is still too severe.—But tell me: Why did those Christians fast so strictly?—They wanted to imitate Christ. When Jesus does something, He gives us an example. Christ showed us how to fast; we Christians must imitate Him in His fast; for a true Christian ought to be a little Christ.—*We ought to fast, in order to imitate Jesus' example. (Repeat together).*

They who have imitated Christ most faithfully are the Saints. They all were strict observers of the law of fasting; for without earnest effort to fulfil the duty of fasting one cannot become a Saint. Just think of St. John the Baptist.—A few more examples! St. Charles Borromeo was a great Bishop. But he lived almost exclusively on water and bread and vegetables. St. Catherine of Siena would forgo all food for long periods at a time; her only nourishment was Holy Communion. St. Rose of Lima even as a child used to keep a strict fast. Once she received some fruit as a present. She would like to have eaten it herself. However, she thought to herself: "No, for the love of Jesus I will not eat any of it." Then she gave it to some poor child. That filled her heart with joy. Do you see? That is how the Saints fasted and thus gave us an example.—*We ought to fast also, in order to imitate the example of God's Saints. (Repeat together).*

2. Again I ask: Why were the early Christians so zealous in fasting?—Many of them were once great sinners. Now they wanted to do penance for their sins by fasting. For to fast means to do penance. Whoever during this earthly life is unwilling to do penance, will be obliged to do penance at some future time, namely in the life beyond the grave. Of course, most of those Christians had only venial sins upon their souls. But even for little sins there is a Purgatory; there one will have to burn and do penance for one's sins. Therefore the early Christians preferred

to do penance for their sins in this life rather than become Poor Souls in Purgatory.—For us too, the rule holds good: Fast or go to Purgatory! Which do you prefer? To be sure, careless Christians say: "Oh, Purgatory! That is nothing; I will get out of it soon again!" Yes, it is true; you will indeed get out of it again; but it is far better, if you do not get into it at all. Why? You will see for yourselves some time.—**The Church commands us to fast and abstain, in order that we may satisfy for our sins.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

3. Again I ask: Why were those early Christians so strict in regard to fasting and abstaining?—By fasting and abstaining the soul becomes strong, and that is necessary. Just listen! If a horse is real wild and unruly and is inclined to run away, what do we do?—We cut down on its food and give it only a little portion of oats. Then that horse soon gives up its wild behaviour and becomes tame.—Now you see, dear children, there is in us also a wild and unruly nature. Many a child does not want to get up in the morning, does not want to work at all, does not want to obey. It gets angry for the least little thing, if things do not go according to its liking. It always wants to eat more and more, even after it has had enough. Or it is tempted to enjoy impure things. All these things are wicked passions; they burn within the heart like an unquenchable fire. That is the reason, why one generally does evil so quickly, but good generally so slowly. So it has always been, even with those early Christians. But they knew how to help themselves. They thought to themselves: "Just wait, you stubborn body! We will tame your wicked passions"—and they gave it only very little meat and made it fast severely.—That is the chief reason why we fast and abstan: **The Church commands us to fast and abstain, in order that we may mortify our passions.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

4. Just one more question! Why did those Christians abstain from flesh-meat, especially on Fridays?—You recall what they said: "Why should we not abstain from the use of flesh-meat, which we like so much, on the day when our dear Saviour gave up His life for our sakes?" This is the reason.—**The Church commands us to abstain from flesh-meat on Fridays, in honor of the day on which our Saviour died.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

5. In the early Christian ages there was as yet no Commandment of fasting. That was not necessary at all. Even without that Commandment the Christians were filled with zeal for fasting. Only later on did the Church frame a special law in regard to fasting. Now fasting is a strict Commandment. We ought to show, that we are obedient children of the Church. That is another reason.—*We ought to fast and abstain, in order to show our obedience to the Catholic Church. (Repeat together).* The Church is indeed our mother, and a child must obey its mother. But a child, that is unwilling to obey its mother, will not want to obey the heavenly Father either. Therefore, whoever does not observe the law of fasting, sins and will be punished by God. "He that will not hear the Church, let him be to thee as a heathen and a publican."

Write on the blackboard:

1. *Why do we fast:*
   a) to satisfy for our sins;
   b) to mortify our evil passions.
2. *Why do we abstain on Fridays?*
   To honor the day on which Christ died.

Synthesis. Do you now understand, why the Church wants us to fast? There are several reasons. Tell me them. Therefore the Church does not want to hurt or harm us by her Commandment. On the contrary, she wants to lead us some day into Heaven; therefore she demands fasting and abstaining. But why do we ab-

stain on Fridays? *(Have the pupils read the answers from the Catechism. Assign the lesson for the next class).*

Application. 1. *Fasting does good to the soul!*—Those early Christians knew that; therefore they were such strict observers of the practice of fasting. You, too, ought to keep the law of fast very conscientiously. If you feel the inclination to eat meat on a Friday, just look at Jesus on the Cross! Why if you broke the law of fast, you could not look Him straight in the eyes any more; you would have to feel ashamed unto death. Jesus has done so much for you, and you are unwilling to do anything for Him! Remember this: He that eats and drinks much, will not have the grace of God long in his heart; but wickedness will soon thrive there in abundance like so many wild weeds. That has been so ever since original sin. Therefore we must sometimes hurt the body, in order to do good to the soul. One thing more! If a person is unwilling to give up eating meat on Fridays, the Lord God will come some day and forbid him the use of bread on Sundays. **That has happened often.**

2. *Fasting does good to the body!*—Many people imagine indeed, that a person will get sick from fasting. In your Bible History is related the story of the boy Daniel. Daniel together with three other Jewish boys were to eat at the King's table. However, these boys thought to themselves: "But then we will have to eat forbidden meat!" They told it to the steward. But he feared greatly and said: "If the King were to notice, that your faces are thinner than the faces of the other boys, it would cost me my life!" But Daniel replied: "I pray you, give us a trial for ten days, and give us nothing but vegetables to eat and water to drink!" And what happened? After ten days the faces of these four boys were more comely and handsome than the faces of all the other boys. Do you see? Fasting does good to the body.—St. Paul was a hermit. He lived only on bread and water; and yet, he lived to be

113 years old. Hippocrates is considered to be the father of doctors. He lived to be 140 years old and was never sick in his life. Once some one asked him: "Tell us, please, how it is, that you got to be so old!" He replied: "Listen to my secret. I have never in all my life fully satisfied my appetite!" Fasting does good to the body. Yes, what doctors say is really true: Sickness comes mostly from overeating and overdrinking. Very few people have died from eating too little, but very many have already died from eating too much.

(Here the catechist might give the children some practical hints as to how they might mortify themselves at meals, etc. and acquire the habit of fasting).

LESSON VI.

The Easter Duty.

Catechetical Unit:

1) Which is the third Commandment of the Church? L. XXXV, Q. 389 (in part).

2) Which is the fourth Commandment of the Church? L. XXXV, Q. 389 (in part).

3) What is meant by the command of confessing at least once a year? L. XXXVI, Q. 397).

4) Should we confess only once a year? L. XXXVI, Q. 398.

5) Should children go to confession? L. XXXVI, Q. 390.

6) What is the Easter time? L. XXXVI, Q. 401.

7) What sin does he commit who neglects to receive Communion during the Easter time? L. XXXVI, Q. 400.

Preparation. Dear children, there are several very good reasons, why we are obliged to fast and abstain. Let us review these reasons. *(Question the pupils briefly on the preceding lesson).*—All of you have al-

ready gone to Confession and Holy Communion. Tell me: From whom have we Confession? Confession is a gift of God; we have received this gift from Christ Himself. Still greater and holier than Confession is Communion. Do you know why?—In Holy Communion Jesus Himself comes into our heart. But Christ has given us these two precious, heavenly gifts, in order that we might thankfully accept them and use them. How often we ought to use the Sacraments Jesus did not say. But the Church has told us plainly in the third and the fourth Commandments. Let us say these Commandments together. The third Commandment of the Church is: **to confess at least once a year.** The fourth Commandment of the Church is: **to receive the Holy Eucharist during the Easter time.** *(Use the blackboard; see the diagram below just above the synthesis).*

Aim. Now I shall first tell you how the Christians in the early ages looked upon the practice of confessing and communicating. From that we shall see: *what the Church demands and what the Church desires.*

Presentation. Let us look backward about 1700 years. That is still the age of the early Christians. It is Sunday. The Christians assemble for the Divine services. To be sure, the house of God is still poor and small. And yet, it is infinitely rich, because Jesus dwells in it. Many people are already there, men and women and children. Most of them go to the priest, kneel down and receive his blessing. I wonder what those Christians are doing?—They are confessing their sins to the priest; for they want to go to Holy Communion. Now Divine worship begins.

An old, venerable priest stands at the altar and celebrates the adorable Sacrifice. It is the Offertory, the Consecration, the Communion—everything nearly just the same as it is now with us. At the Communion the priest pauses. Now we see a very impressive scene: All the Christians arise and go together to the altar. There they kneel down and receive the Blessed Sac-

rament from the hand of the priest. And the holy reverence and devotion! One would almost imagine, that the angels had come down from Heaven. Praying in silence they return to their places and thank God for the heavenly gift. Now they are thoroughly happy; for Jesus dwells in their hearts.

Do you see? That is how the early Christians acted every Sunday. But of course, things did not remain like that always. Gradually many became careless and cold; they had no real joy any more in receiving Holy Communion. They went to Confession and Communion less and less frequently; yes, some even did not go at all any more. Earthly things were dearer to them than heavenly things. That hurt our holy mother, the Church, very, very much. Then the Holy Father called all the Bishops to Rome. About four hundred came together and held a council. Finally the Chief Shepherd of the whole Church, the Pope, solemnly defined: "In the name of Jesus Christ we command all Christians of the whole world: Thou shalt confess at least once a year and receive the Holy Eucharist during the Easter time!"—That happened about 700 years ago (1215). Since then we have the third and fourth Commandments of the Church.

Explanation. Let us now look at these Commandments of the Church a little more closely. What does the Church command in the third and fourth Commandments?—The Church demands two things from her children: 1. Confession and 2. Communion.

1. Among the early Christians there was as yet no Commandment to confess. Neither was that necessary. The Christians were still filled with holy zeal. To remain in mortal sin—no one wanted to do that; every one would have held that to be the greatest misfortune. If one of them happened to fall into mortal sin, he went at once to Confession, in order to become a child of God again. For good and zealous Christians even now there is no need of a Commandment to confess; they come gladly and they are happy, when the filth of sin is

again taken from their hearts. Only for the indifferent Christians did the Church give the Commandment: "Thou shalt confess at least once a year!" Every one *must* go to Confession once a year. Whoever does not do that is a disobedient child of his holy mother; he sins grievously and excludes himself from the Kingdom of God. Is that not the greatest misfortune? Our Catechism says: **By the command of confessing at least once a year is meant that we are obliged, under pain of mortal sin, to go to confession within the year.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

Now you understand too, the little words *"at least."* What is the earnest wish of the Church?—We ought to do as did the early Christians; that is what the Church desires. To confess often! Then the soul will remain pure. One must wash a dress again and again; is that not so? For every day a little dust and filth clings to it. To the soul, too, a little of the dust and filth of the sin of the world clings. Therefore you must cleanse the soul again and again in Holy Confession. To confess often! That makes dying easy. If one ties only a few little pebbles to the wings of a bird, it can no longer fly very high, but only flutters a little; the little pebbles draw it downward. Do you see? The little sins are like those pebbles to the wings of the soul; they draw the soul downward into Purgatory. But he who confesses often, makes his soul free. Then the soul will some day fly easily like a little bird heavenwards. And that is what our holy Mother wishes.

2. In the early Christian ages not only men and women, but even little children used to go frequently to Holy Confession. Since the Pope proclaimed the third Commandment of the Church, all children, that are old enough to commit mortal sin, that is, from about seven years of age, are in conscience bound to confess like grown up Christians at least once a year. Therefore our Catechism says: **Children should go to confession when they are old enough to commit sin,**

which is commonly about the age of seven years. *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).* — But of course, good and pious Christian children will go, not only once a year, but often, as often as possible to Holy Confession; for that purifies the soul and makes it strong and beautiful in the sight of Jesus.

3. To confess at least once a year, that is a Christian's duty. Now which is the fourth Commandment of the Church?—The Commandment says "to receive the Holy Eucharist during the Easter time." A Commandment to receive Holy Communion was even less necessary for the early Christians than a Commandment to confess. For in their hearts the love of Jesus glowed like a fire. To have Jesus in their hearts, that made them thoroughly happy. Nor am I surprised at that at all. For there is nothing greater in Heaven and on earth than Jesus in the most Blessed Sacrament. The Commandment to receive Holy Communion is, therefore, again only for lukewarm Christians. He who communicates only once a year has not much Faith in Jesus and still less love for Jesus in his heart. What will a zealous Christian do?—He will go very often to Holy Communion; for he thinks to himself: "I may receive Jesus, the All-holy One; that is indeed a precious grace; yes, so great that no human tongue can tell and no human heart can grasp!" Thus too, does the Church think. Therefore the Church's aim and most earnest desire is, that we receive Holy Communion very frequently.—*It is the intention and the most earnest desire of our holy Church that we should very often partake of this invaluable grace—Holy Communion. (Repeat together).* Our Holy Father, Pope Pius X of blessed memory, the Pope of the Blessed Sacrament as he is lovingly called, has taught, that all who are in the state of grace and have the right intention, namely to please God and to save their own souls, may receive Holy Communion frequently, yes even daily. That invitation is meant for each one of you.

4. The Church also says expressly, *when* every one ought to communicate.—The Commandment has it: "during the Easter time." **The Easter time is, in this country, the time between the first Sunday of Lent and Trinity Sunday.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*—But why ought we to communicate just during the Easter time? Just consider!—Around Eastertime, that is on Holy Thursday, Jesus gave us the great Sacrament of His love. Therefore we ought also to receive Jesus lovingly into our hearts during the Easter time. On Good Friday Jesus, the Easter Lamb, was slain for our sakes. But in Holy Communion we receive the Divine Easter Lamb. Easter Sunday Jesus arose gloriously from the dead, and received a new, glorified Body. Thus too, every Christian ought to arise from the death of sin at Easter, and commence again a new life, a life for God and Heaven. What the Apostle Paul once said holds here: "Our conversation ought to be in Heaven" (Phil. iii, 20).

5. From all this you can easily understand what a serious sin he commits, who through his own fault neglects to receive Holy Communion during this Easter period. Our Catechism says: **He who neglects to receive Communion during the Easter time commits a mortal sin.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).* Dear children, do you not think that such a lukewarm, careless Christian is guilty of the blackest kind of ingratitude to Jesus? Yes, he is unworthy of the name Christian. Never imitate such wicked conduct!

Write on the blackboard:

1. "To confess at least once a year!"

2. Duty—to confess once a year—under pain of mortal sin—all Christians, even children from seven years upwards.

3. "To receive the Holy Eucharist during the Easter time!"

4. Duty—to communicate during the Easter time —from first Sunday in Lent to Trinity Sunday.

5. Sin—mortal sin to neglect the Easter duty through one's own fault.

Synthesis. The example of the early Christians tells us what a good Christian *ought* to do. The third and fourth Commandments of the Church tell us what every Christian *must* do. Which is the third Commandment of the Church? What are we commanded to do by this Commandment? What do the words "at least once a year" mean? How often ought we to confess? What kind of a sin is it, if one breaks the third Commandment of the Church? Should children, too, go to confession? Why ought children to confess frequently? Which is the fourth Commandment of the Church? What are we obliged to do by reason of this Commandment? Who is obliged to keep this Commandment? Does it refer also to children of seven years of age and over? How often ought we to communicate? During what time of the year must we communicate? Why just during the Easter time? When is the Easter time? What kind of sin is it to disobey this Commandment? *(Have the pupils read the answers from the Catechism. Assign the lesson for the next class).*

Application. Now I am going to place a few more questions before you, and you are to decide.—A person receives Holy Communion at Christmas and thinks, that now he has done enough for a whole year. Do you, too, think like that person?—A big sinner goes to confession. But the priest cannot absolve him from his sins, because he is unworthy. Then the sinner says: "Now I am going to wait until next Easter."—I have often seen pupils, who have confessed at Easter and who have gone from the Church without having received Holy Communion.—A person has confessed and communicated a week before the Easter time; is that

enough?—The confession is indeed enough; but not the Holy Communion. Why not?—Say this good resolution after me: "O my Jesus! I promise with all my heart to receive Thee as frequently as possible in the Holy Sacraments of Penance and the Eucharist. Help me to be, not a careless and lukewarm Christian, but a faithful and loving child of Thy Holy Church!"

LESSON VII.

Christian Marriage.

Catechetical Unit:

1) Which is the sixth Commandment of the Church? L. XXXV, Q. 389 (in part).

2) What is the meaning of the Commandment not to marry within the third degree of kindred? L. XXXVI, Q. 403.

3) What is the meaning of the command not to marry privately? L. XXXVI, Q. 404.

4) What is the meaning of the precept not to solemnize marriage at forbidden times? L. XXXVI, Q. 405.

5) What is the nuptial Mass? L. XXXVI, Q. 406.

6) Should Catholics be married at a nuptial Mass? L. XXXVI, Q. 407.

Preparation. Dear children, in the Holy Scripture we read these stirring words: "Delay not to be converted to the Lord, and defer it not from day to day. For His wrath shall come on a sudden, and in the time of vengeance He will destroy thee" (Ecclesiasticus v, 8s); "today if you shall hear His voice, harden not your hearts" (Ps. xciv, 8). Thus does God urge us to holy Penance, and thus does He warn us not to postpone our penance from day to day. Jesus says: "Amen, amen, I say unto you: Except you shall eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink His Blood, you

shall not have life in you. He that eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood, hath everlasting life" (John vi, 54s). In these words the Saviour invites us to Holy Communion. The Church has given us two Commandments in regard to the duty of Penance and Communion. Let us review this teaching. *(Question the pupils briefly on the foregoing lesson).*—Jesus by His Passion and Death gained grace for all men. He instituted two means to enable men at all times to share in the fruits of His Redemption. Which are these means?—They are the Church and the Sacraments. Which are the Sacraments of Christ?—Which of these have you already received?—Christ entrusted His Sacraments to the keeping of His Church. Therefore the Church has the right and duty of telling us how and when to receive the Sacraments. Just as she has given us special Commandments in regard to the Sacraments of Penance and the Eucharist, so she has also given us a special law in regard to the Sacrament of Matrimony or marriage. Let us say it together: The sixth Commandment of the Church is: **not to marry persons who are not Catholics, or who are related to us within the third degree of kindred, nor privately without witnesses, nor to solemnize marriage at forbidden times.** *(Use the blackboard; see the diagram below just above the synthesis).*—St. Ignatius, Bishop of Antioch and Martyr of the Faith, who died about the year 107, says: "It is meet that persons about to be married should enter into that holy state according to the directions of the Bishop, that the marriage should be performed in the Lord, and not by mere inclination." So it has always been in God's Church; so too, it is today.

Aim. I am going to explain to you the meaning of this sixth Commandment of the Church, so that you may know *what is the Church's will in reference to marriage.* But first I shall tell you a story of a marriage, that was blessed by the Lord Himself.

Presentation. A long time ago a certain young English gentleman, named Gilbert, undertook a journey to

the Holy Land, accompanied by his servant Richard, in order to fight against the infidels, who were in possession of the Holy Places. Soon both of these pious Christians were taken prisoners, and came into the hands of a Saracen (Mohammedan) prince, who treated Gilbert kindly, because of his excellent qualities. While in this state of slavery the daughter of this prince was attracted by Gilbert's great virtues and piety. She took every opportunity of speaking with him, whenever she could do so without being observed. She questioned him about his country and his religion, and gradually Gilbert unfolded to her the truths of our holy Faith. This so moved the heathen princess, that she resolved to embrace the Christian religion at any cost, just as soon as the opportunity presented itself.

Meanwhile the two Christian slaves, Gilbert and Richard, worked out a plan of escape, and soon they were free men after a captivity of eighteen months. When the young princess saw herself deprived of Gilbert's instruction and advice, she wept bitterly. Detesting from her heart the superstitions of her religion, she determined to seek out Gilbert in the land of his birth; for she wanted to procure through his help the means of becoming a child of Christ's holy Church.

Accordingly she fled from her father's house and embarking on an English vessel, she arrived at length, destitute and friendless, in the great city of London. But Almighty God did not abandon her. While wandering through the busy streets of London, in the greatest distress, unable, because of her ignorance of the language, to make inquiries as to Gilbert's residence, one day she chanced to see among the crowds of people the figure of Richard, who had been sent out on a message by his master. Overjoyed at this meeting, she told him the object of her mission, and begged him to lead her to his master, so that he might assist her in her conversion. Gilbert procured lodging for

her in the house of a pious lady of his acquaintance, where, on the following day, he visited this brave maiden. Throwing herself at his feet, this heathen princess besought Gilbert with tears to procure for herself that priceless gift of the Divine friendship,—Holy Baptism and the Catholic Faith. Gilbert was deeply stirred at her lively Faith and generous dispositions, and not only promised to do his utmost to obtain for her what she so earnestly desired, but he felt himself inspired by God to make her his wife, so that he might the better be able to devote himself to the work of her conversion.

He told his good resolution to the Bishop, who approved of it most heartily. Shortly afterwards this princess was solemnly baptized and received the name of Matilda. Then Gilbert took her to wife in the presence of the Bishop and two witnesses. The Bishop himself gave the nuptial blessing to this happy couple during a solemn nuptial Mass. God blessed their union with a son, the great St. Thomas a Becket, who received the crown of martyrdom under King Henry II, in defence of the liberties of the Church.

Explanation. 1. How wonderfully God's grace works in the hearts of men! Who would have imagined, that good could have come out of the slavery of this young Christian hero? However, God is wonderful in His works! He used Gilbert to be the instrument for the conversion of that heathen princess. And after she had been baptized into the true fold, Gilbert married her. But let us suppose, that Gilbert had tried to marry that heathen princess before she had become a Christian, would that have been a lawful marriage in the sight of God and His Church?—By no means; for the Church is strongly opposed to the marriage of a Catholic with a non-Catholic, and more so, if that non-Catholic is not even baptized. Therefore Gilbert refused to marry her, until she had become a Catholic. That is right; he was an obedient child of the Church. —By the sixth Commandment of the Church we are

commanded not to marry persons who are not Catholics. *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

But not all Catholics are as conscientious as was Gilbert. It frequently happens, that Catholics make up their minds to marry persons not of their own Faith, in spite of the laws of the Church to the contrary. The Church knows very well, that these lukewarm and disobedient children will marry anyway, and thus damn their souls, unless she permits such marriages to take place. Therefore, like a kind mother that goes to the very limit, in order to prevent worse evils, the Church sometimes allows *mixed marriages;* she grants a dispensation, by which she allows such marriages to be celebrated. But only under certain conditions. In the first place the non-Catholic party must promise in writing not to interfere with the religion of the Catholic party; secondly the non-Catholic party must promise to allow all the children to be brought up as Catholics. The Catholic party must do all in his or her power to convert the non-Catholic party to the Catholic Faith. Finally the promise must be made, that no other marriage ceremony will be performed except that before the priest and two witnesses. Only when these conditions have been agreed to will the Church permit such a marriage to take place. And rightly so too; for the most sacred treasure we possess is the heavenly gift of Divine Catholic Faith. That must be safeguarded at all costs. Remember then, dear children, that even though the Church does allow mixed marriages at times, she, nevertheless, detests and hates them.

2. You yourselves know, that it may happen sometimes, that two Catholics wish to get married, although they are closely related to each other by blood. For instance, let us suppose that two first cousins make up their minds to get married to each other. What does the Church think of such a marriage?—First cousins are related to each other by the ties of blood. Brother and sister, too, are related to each other by blood ties;

in fact, they are even more closely related to each other than are first cousins. We say that brother and sister are blood relatives in the first degree of kindred. First cousins are blood relatives to each other in the second degree of kindred. Second cousins are blood relatives to each other in the third degree of kindred. Now not even God's law (or the natural law, as it is called) permits the marriage of brother and sister. Neither can the Church allow anything which God's law forbids. But what about marriages of first and second cousins?—God's laws does not forbid such marriages; but the law of the Church does. The sixth Commandment of the Church says: "Thou shalt not marry persons, who are related to thee within the third degree of kindred!" And she has her own good reasons for forbidding such marriages to take place. You can now understand the meaning of this Commandment.—**The meaning of the Commandment not to marry within the third degree of kindred, is that no one is allowed to marry another within the third degree of blood relationship.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).* (You will notice, that our Catechism says: "Within the *fourth* degree of kindred." This has been changed recently by the Church to read "within the *third* degree of kindred").—The Church has made this Commandment; therefore the Church can also dispense from the law; can permit such marriages to take place, if there are good reasons. The Church grants a dispensation occasionally, by which she permits marriages to take place between Catholics, that are related to each other within the third degree of blood relationship.

(Moreover, the Church forbids marriages, not only between blood relatives within the third degree of kindred, but also between persons, that are related to each other by marriage. For instance, the Church forbids a husband to marry certain blood relatives of his wife, as for example, his sister-in-law. Likewise the Church forbids a wife to marry certain blood relatives

of her husband, as for example, her brother-in-law. But more of this when you get older. Finally, the Church also forbids marriages between godfathers and godmothers and the child, for whom they acted as sponsors).

3. Now let us think of our story again. To whom did Gilbert and Matilda go, in order to get married?—They went to the Bishop. There publicly in the presence of the Bishop, God's priest, and two witnesses, they pronounced the marriage vows. And the blessing of God's priest descended upon them. That is the proper way for Catholics to enter the married state. The Church's Commandment says: "Thou shalt not marry privately without witnesses!"—Therefore: **the command not to marry privately means that none should marry without the blessing of God's priest or without witnesses.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*—Now if any Catholic would dare to go before a Protestant minister or a justice of the peace to be married, he would not be married at all in the eyes of God and the Church. Moreover, a Catholic, that would dare to attempt marriage before a non-Catholic minister, would also be excommunicated from the Church; that is, he would be forbidden the use of the Sacraments and would be excluded from a share in the Holy Masses and public prayers offered by the Church. If such a wicked child of the Church were to die, wilfully excommunicated from the Church, he would die in mortal sin and be lost forever. After the Church has declared a person excommunicated, no Mass or funeral prayers may be publicly offered for him; neither may he be buried in consecrated ground. So greatly does the Church detest such wicked marriages! Therefore, every marriage of Catholics must be entered into before the priest and two witnesses. Otherwise it is no marriage at all in the sight of God.

4. That must have been a beautiful and solemn celebration, when Gilbert took Matilda to wife "for better

or for worse, in sickness and in health, until death doth them part!" On three different occasions their names were read aloud to the people in the Church. (This is called the "proclaiming of the bans"). Then on the evening before the marriage Gilbert and Matilda went to Confession, to prepare their hearts aright for the reception of the holy Sacrament of Matrimony. The next morning they came in solemn procession to the church, where they were joined in wedlock by the Bishop before the altar. Then followed a special Mass, called the nuptial Mass, which the Church has appointed to be read for those just married, in order to call down God's blessing upon them in a special manner. After the Pater noster of the Mass, the Bishop turned about and begged Almighty God to shower His choicest benedictions upon them both. Then they came forward and devoutly received Jesus in Holy Communion. What reverence and devotion did they not show during all these ceremonies! And what rich graces did not Jesus send into their pure hearts! That is the kind of marriage that the Church desires of all Catholics.—**Catholics should be married at a nuptial Mass, because they thereby show a greater reverence for the holy Sacrament and bring richer blessings into their wedded life.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).* **A nuptial Mass is a Mass appointed by the Church to invoke a special blessing upon the married couple.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

5. The Church has surrounded the rite of Christian marriage with most beautiful and solemn ceremonies, and it is the Church's wish that her children should receive this Sacrament with all the pomp and splendor possible. Moreover, when the newly married couple arrive at home, it is also perfectly right and proper, that they should enjoy themselves with their friends and acquaintances. But all this should be done in a good and Christian manner. The only thing the Church forbids is sin, because that is God's will. However, you remember, that there are certain times of

the ecclesiastical year, which are set apart by the Church for the practice of penance and special prayer. They are the holy penitential season of Advent and of Lent. During these solemn periods all Christians must practice mortification and abstain from worldly pleasures. Now tell me yourselves: Would it be proper during these sorrowful times to celebrate the marriage ceremony with all the joyous pomp and solemnity of a nuptial Mass, and with feasting and dancing and frolic?—Surely, that is contrary to the spirit of penance of the seasons of Advent and Lent. Therefore the Church has given us a special Commandment, which says: "Thou shalt not solemnize marriage at forbidden times!"—**The meaning of the precept not to solemnize marriages at forbidden times is that during Lent and Advent the marriage ceremony should not be performed with pomp or a nuptial Mass.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*—But this does not mean, that the Church forbids all marriages during Advent and Lent. On the contrary, marriage may be entered into at any time of the year. But during the solemn seasons of Advent and Lent Catholics must be married quietly, without all those solemnities and ceremonies that go with a nuptial Mass and with joyous home-celebration.

Write on the blackboard:

1. "Not to marry persons who are not Catholics, or who are related to us within the third degree of kindred, nor privately without witnesses, nor to solemnize marriage at forbidden times."
2. Church *forbids*—a) mixed marriages; b) marriages with relatives within the third degree of blood relationship; c) private marriages (viz. without presence of priest and two witnesses); d) solemn marriage within the forbidden times (Advent and Lent).
3. Church *desires*—the nuptial Mass—out of reverence for the Sacrament — to invoke God's blessing.

Synthesis. The Church has the care of the Sacraments; hence also of Matrimony. In what Commandment does the Church tell us our duties in regard to marriage? Which is the sixth Commandment? May Catholics marry non-Catholics? What do you call such marriages? Does the Church ever permit such marriages? What conditions must be fulfilled? Who grants the dispensation? Are Catholics allowed to marry relatives? Up to what degree of kindred are marriages forbidden? Are such marriages ever allowed? (What other marriages does the Church forbid?) How should Catholics be married? What is the Mass for newly married people called? Why should Catholics be married at a nuptial Mass? When does the Church forbid the nuptial Mass? What do you call these times? What is a private marriage? How many witnesses are required? *(Have the pupils read the answers from the Catechism. Assign the lesson for the next class).*

Application. 1. The Church shows great displeasure towards Catholics who refuse to obey her laws. Thus at a mixed-marriage she forbids the marriage to take place in the church, or even in the sacristy. The priest may not wear a surplice and stole or any other sacred vestment; neither may he use Holy Water, or the sign of the Cross; he may not bless the ring or even use the Church's official language, Latin. Everything is done in the coldest manner, to remind these disobedient children of the Church of the fact, that they are doing something displeasing to their Mother, the Church.

2. In the Christian religion Matrimony is a Sacrament. Therefore all Christians ought to prepare themselves for the reception of marriage just as they should for any of the other Sacraments. Imagine a boy or a girl going to First Holy Communion laughing, talking and gazing about in a curious and lukewarm manner, without any thought of the great Sacrament he or she is about to receive! Imagine such a boy or girl re-

turning from the Table of the Lord and at once forgetting the great heavenly grace he or she has received! Now the Sacrament of Matrimony deserves the very same careful preparation, that Holy Communion demands from all pious Catholics. Therefore, the Church does not like marriages to take place in the afternoon or the evening. Remember, that Catholics should be married in a nuptial Mass, and should prepare themselves well by Confession and Communion; for surely they need God's blessing from the very first moment of their married life.

3. The Church has many laws in regard to marriage. But you must be careful not to confound the marriage laws of the Church with the laws, which the State makes in regard to marriage. Sometimes the State makes laws, that are contrary to the laws of God and the Church. For example, the State allows divorce; it permits persons to marry again, if the husband or wife has been sentenced to life imprisonment; it does not recognize many of the other laws of the Church (impediments to marriage). Catholics may not obey such laws, for we must obey God more than man. And God gave the Sacrament of Matrimony, not to the keeping of the State, but to the care of the Church which He Himself has instituted.—But when the State makes laws with regard only to the *civil effects* of marriage, such, for instance, as refer to the property of the husband or wife, the inheritance of children, the registration or the license of marriages, these laws must be obeyed; for the civil or temporal rulers are our lawful superiors and must be obeyed as we learned in the fourth Commandment of God.

III.

SIN: ITS NATURE AND KINDS

LESSON I.

The Nature of Sin.

Catechetical Unit:

1) Is original sin the only kind of sin? L. VI, Q. 51.

2) What is actual sin? L. VI, Q. 52.

Preparation. Dear children, you all have heard the word *"sin"* many times. I have frequently warned you against sin. Did you always take that warning to heart? Just consider, that upon sin depends eternal life or eternal death. Sin, too, can make us eternally unhappy. And yet, you all have already committed sin. Yes, all men are born into the world with sin on their souls. What do you call the sin, which all men inherit from Adam and Eve?—Why is it called original sin?—Did we commit it ourselves?—Was there any exception to original sin?—What do we call this privilege by which the Blessed Virgin Mary was preserved free from guilt of original sin?—How do we get rid of original sin?

But there are many other sins, which *we commit ourselves.* Tell me some pet sins of children. How can a child sin against the second Commandment of God? against the fourth Commandment of God? against the second Commandment of the Church? against the first Commandment of the Church?—You see, then, that beside original sin there is another kind of sin, which we commit ourselves. We call this sin *"actual sin."* Our Catechism says: **Original sin is not the only kind of sin; there is another kind of sin, which we commit ourselves, called actual sin.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard; see the diagram below*

just above the synthesis).—You have often heard of sin, too, from the Bible History. For instance, the sin of Cain, the sin of the Israelites in the desert. Let us pause here.

Aim. But first let us refresh our memories concerning this story. Then I shall show you from this story: *What sin is; and who commits sin.*

(N. B. Since this story is already known to the children, the catechist may permit the children to relate that story while he himself supplements whatever may be necessary).

Presentation. The people of Israel pitched their tents at the foot of Mount Sinai. Amidst thunder and lightning God announced His Ten Commandments. Then Moses built an altar at the foot of the Mount and offered burned sacrifices to the Lord. But the Lord said to Moses: "Come up to Me into the mountain! I will give to thee tables of stone, upon which is written the Law." Moses obeyed and spent forty days and forty nights upon the mountain. The Lord gave to him two tables of stone, upon which His hand had engraved the Law.

Now since Moses remained away so long, the people pressed Aaron and cried out: "Arise! make us gods, that may go before us; for as to this Moses, the man that brought us out of the land of Egypt, we know not what has befallen him." For fear of the people Aaron replied: "Well then, take the golden earrings from the ears of your wives, and your sons and your daughters, and bring them to me!" And they did so. Aaron melted them into a golden calf, such as the Egyptians had. All the people rejoiced and cried out: "These are thy gods, Israel, that have brought thee out of the land of Egypt!" The people sat down to eat and to drink, and they rose up to play and danced before the golden calf.

Then God said to Moses: "Go, get thee down! Thy people, which thou hast brought out of the land of Egypt, hath sinned. They have quickly strayed from

the way, which thou didst show them." Moses came down from the mountain and carried the two tables of stone in his hands. When he drew near the camp, he saw the people dancing before the golden calf. Burning with holy anger, he threw the two stone tables upon the ground, so that they broke to pieces at the foot of the mountain. Then he laid hold of the calf and threw it into the fire. To Aaron he said: "What hath this people done to thee, that thou shouldst bring upon them this heinous sin?" Thereupon he had all those, who had committed the sin of idolatry, put to death by the sword.

Explanation. 1. Sinful people, what have you done! You know that. God Himself had spoken solemnly from the mountain: "Thou shalt not make to thyself a graven thing, in order to adore it!" God meant in all seriousness what He said. How do you know that?—Mighty was the lightning and the thunder, and the entire mountain smoked and was aflame and trembled. All the people were frightened and said: "All that the Lord commands, we will do!" That was only a little while before. And yet, what did they do now?—They forgot and deserted their Lord and their God. They made for themselves a god, an idol. And this statue made by the hands of men they adored. What a sin! God had expressly said: "You may not do that! That is My commandment, that is My law!" But they did not obey God's commandment; they transgressed, or broke, the Divine commandment. Therefore God said: "Thy people hath sinned!"—Do you now see what sin is?—**Actual sin is a transgression, an offence, against the law of God.**—*(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

But not every transgression is a sin. Just listen! God says: "Thou shalt not kill!" Now if a lion were to tear a man to pieces, why would not that be a sin? —That animal cannot do anything else; it simply follows its natural inclination and has no free will. And if a person must say: "I cannot help it; I did not do

that wilfully!"—then he, too, is free from sin. Where there is no bad will there neither is there sin. Remember that well! But tell me yourselves: Did not the Israelites know the law of God?—They knew the Divine law very exactly. Were they forced to transgress or break the law?—They did it of their own free will, wilfully.—**Actual sin is a wilful transgression against the law of God.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard inserting the word "wilful").* Therefore actual sin is a wilful act contrary to the law of God. Every sin is *an act of disobedience to God.* God says: "Do that!" and yet man does not do it. God says: "Do not do that!" and man does it any way. The sinner acts according to his own will and not according to the will of God.

2. Let us look at the sin of the Israelites a little more closely. We shall find, that back of that *one* sin there are several other sins.

Since Moses remained so long on the mountain, many became impatient and began to murmur. They thought to themselves: "Why is he so long in coming? We will not trust him any more. Who knows, but that this Moses has deceived us!" Thus did they think evil in their hearts; they thought that perhaps Moses might even be a deceiver. That was already a sin; of course, only a *sin of thought.*—But out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaketh. They could not hide their evil thoughts very long; soon they spoke them out openly. That was *a sin in word.*—Then they went to Aaron and demanded of him: "Up with you! Make us a god, that will go on before us!" Therefore they did not want to have anything more to do with the one true God, Who had done so much good for them; they wanted to have strange gods; they desired false gods. That was *a sin of desire.*—Now it was but one more step to the wicked deed. Aaron did as they wished, and they actually committed detestable idolatry. Now they had committed a *sin of deed.* You see, then, that one can sin by bad thoughts, desires, words

and deeds.—So far from the right path did this ungrateful people wander! To this must be added something else: They did evil, namely detestable idolatry; but they neglected, or omitted, to do good, namely to worship God as He desired to be worshipped. They were guilty of the *sin of omission.* Therefore, one can also sin by the omission of the good, which one is bound to do. Now you know what is meant by actual sin, the sin which we ourselves commit. Our Catechism says: **Actual sin is any wilful thought, word, deed, or omission contrary to the law of God.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

(N. B. The kinds of sins could also be deduced from the actual knowledge of the children instead of from story).

Write on the blackboard:

1. Kinds of sin:
   a) original sin;
   b) actual sin.
2. Actual sin:
   a) a wilful transgression of the law of God;
   b) by thought, word, desire, deed, omission (of good).

Synthesis. You have known for a long time what it means to commit sin. Now you understand too: What is sin?—Is original sin the only kind of sin? Did we commit original sin ourselves? What do we call the sin, which we ourselves commit? How can we commit actual sin? Show me that from the story of the people of Israel.—Is every transgression a sin? What kind of transgression is required, in order that it be a sin? Many people imagine, that only bad deeds are sins. Far from the mark! How, then, can a person commit sin? *(Have the pupils read the answers from the Catechism. Assign the lesson for the next class).*

Application. 1. *Every sin is a wilful transgression of the law of God.*—Just think of the sin of the angels! God wanted to test the obedience of the angels. Then one of the most beautiful of the angels, Lucifer, rose up and cried out: "I will not serve Thee!" And many

thousands of angels said: "We, too, will not serve Thee!" Do you see? They transgressed the law of God. But what happened on account of their disobedience? Jesus says: "I saw Satan like lightning falling from Heaven" (Luke x, 18). *One* sin did that!—Think of the first sin of man. God said to Adam: "From the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you may not eat!" Nevertheless, Adam and Eve ate of the forbidden fruit. They transgressed the law of God. But by their disobedience they ate death unto themselves. *One* sin did that!—A child utters a curse word every few moments. It thinks to itself: "I did not think of it at all; it just came out of my mouth!" That excuse is worthless in God's sight.—That child has also a stubborn will and does not want to obey its mother. Neither does that child want to obey God and, therefore, it sins.—That child cannot get along at all with its brothers and sisters; every day it begins to fight and quarrel.—A boy does not keep the Friday abstinence; he pilfers meat from home. He has transgressed the law of God and the Church. Therefore he has committed a double sin; for the Church commands in God's name.—He misses Mass on Sunday. Why? "The other boys said, that I should go with them!" Why is that a sin?—

2. *But not every transgression of the law of God is a sin.* Noe got drunk, so that he lost his consciousness. But he did not do that wilfully; for he did not as yet know the power of strong wine.—Bad thoughts enter into a child's mind; but it dislikes and detests them very much. Do not be disturbed, my child! Where there is no bad will, there neither is there sin.—A three year old child repeats curse words. That child does not know what it is doing.—A child is sick on a Sunday and cannot go to Holy Mass; therefore it weeps. Do not fear! God knows it!—An insane person jumps into the water. The Lord forgives him! He does not know what he is doing.—A person eats

meat on an Ember Wednesday. But he does not do it "intentionally;" he does not even think of it.

3. Careless worldlings like to say: "Thoughts pay no toll!" They mean: "I can think what I want; that is nobody's concern." Is that true?—With God it is not true, that thoughts pay no toll. He pursues evil to the very root and also punishes sinful thoughts. Therefore away with every wicked thought! Whoever plays with fire, is in danger of burning himself. And he that plays with bad thoughts, exposes himself to the danger of burning forever. God is always looking into your heart.

LESSON II.

Mortal Sin.

Catechetical Unit:

1) How many kinds of actual sin are there? L. VI, Q. 53.

2) What is mortal sin? L. VI, Q. 54.

3) How many things are necessary to make a sin mortal? L. VI, Q. 56.

4) Why is this sin called mortal? L. VI, Q. 55.

Preparation. Dear children, what is sin? We saw that from the story of the people of Israel. Let us review it. *(Question the pupils briefly on the foregoing lesson).*—But now comes an important question: Are all sins equal before God?—The Israelites committed detestable idolatry. Then Moses said to Aaron: "Why did you help the people to commit such a terrible sin?" Do you see? That was a great sin; it belongs to the first Commandment of God. Now if a child prays badly, that, too, is a sin against the first Commandment. But judge for yourselves: Is it all the same, whether a person commits idolatry or whether he prays badly? Your common sense tells you the answer to that clearly: There is all the difference in the world between them. That is what Christ says too.

Once he lectured the Jews very severely, because they were often so very uncharitable to one another and could not bear with one another. He said: "Why seest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, and seest not the beam that is in thy own?" (Matt. vii, 3). That surely is a very strange saying. Did you ever see a mote, or even a beam in some one's eye? Jesus means: You see the little faults of others, but your own great faults you do not see. Do you hear? There are sins as small as motes and sins as great as beams. There are small sins, and there are great sins: venial sins and mortal sins.—**There are two kinds of actual sins—mortal and venial.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard; see the diagram below just above the synthesis).*

Aim. *When does one commit mortal sin?* Every Christian ought to know that. For we must fear mortal sin more than death. Let us answer that question today.—You all know the story of Joseph of Egypt. We are going to learn about Joseph's brothers today; for we can learn even from the wicked.

Presentation. Joseph was a good boy and therefore the favorite of his father Jacob. He, together with his brothers, tended the flocks of his father. Once his brothers did something very wicked. Frightened and sad Joseph ran home to his father and told him all. That angered his brothers. From that day forth they could no longer bear the sight of Joseph, and would not speak a kind word to him any more. But after Joseph had told them about his remarkable dream that he had of the sheaves in the field, they formed the plan in their hearts of putting him to death.

One day the brothers saw him coming. Then they said to one another. "See, there comes the dreamer! Let us kill him and say: A wild animal has devoured him. Then there will be an end to his dreams." When Reuben heard that, he felt pity and said: "No! do not take away his life! Rather throw him into this cistern and do not soil your hands with his blood."

Scarcely had Joseph arrived in the midst of his brethren, when they seized him, stripped him of his coat of many colors, and threw him into an empty cistern. Then they sat down and began to eat. Meanwhile strange merchants happened along that way with their camels. Juda said to his brothers: "What doth it profit us to kill our brother? Let us rather sell him and not soil our hands with his blood. He is after all our brother." This suggestian pleased them. They drew Joseph forth again from the well and sold him for twenty pieces of silver. The merchants led him away into Egypt.

The brothers then killed a goat and dipped Joseph's coat in the blood of that animal. Thus they sent the garment to their father with the message: "We have found this coat. See, if it be not the coat of thy son?" The father recognized the coat and said: "It is the coat of my son. A wild animal has devoured my Joseph!" For sorrow he rent his garments and wept over his lost son. All his children came to him, in order to comfort their father. But he would not be comforted, but rather lamented unceasingly: "Soon I shall go down into the kingdom of the dead to my son!"

Explanation. 1. Oh! how could those brothers be so heartless. God has said expressly: "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself!" And again God says: "Thou shalt not kill!" God means: Thou mayest not do any evil to thy brother. That is a *strict law of God.* The brothers knew that very well; they had *sufficient reflection,* as we say. And yet, they transgressed God's law entirely by their own free will. Or as we say, they did that with *full consent of their will.* They no longer had any spark of love for Joseph. Hatred glowed in their hearts like the fires of Hell. But St. John says: "Whoever hateth his brother is a murderer" (I John, iii, 15). Yes, more than that! The brothers did not only cherish thoughts of murder, they were already about to commit that terrible crime; everything was agreed to and well thought out. Now

tell me yourselves: Was that a slight matter? No indeed, that was something very great; that was a *grievous matter,* as we say. Therefore it was a mortal sin: a grievous offence against the law of God.—**A mortal sin is a grievous offence against the law of God.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).* Now mark well! For every mortal sin three things are necessary: 1) a grievous matter—what we do must be a serious offence against the law of God; 2) sufficient reflection—we must know clearly and fully that what we are doing is a serious offence against the law of God; 3) full consent—the evil that we do must happen wilfully; therefore with a bad will. Our Catechism says: **To make a sin mortal three things are necessary: a grievous matter, sufficient reflection, and full consent of the will.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

But that was not the only mortal sin. The brothers also sinned grievously against their father. In the fourth Commandment God commands: "Thou shalt honor thy father and thy mother!" These wicked sons caused their good father untold sorrow, so that his heart nearly broke with grief. They committed a grievous offence against the law of God. They foresaw all that very plainly; and yet, they did it. They did all that with sufficient reflection and full consent of their will. Was that a slight matter?—That too, was a mortal sin, because they transgressed the law of God in a serious matter with sufficient reflection and full consent of the will.

2. *Mortal* sin! that is a strange word. Perhaps you do not understand that fully. Now pay strict attention! The soul has a natural life, because it is immortal, or will never die. If the soul is free from sin (free from mortal sin) it has also another life; a supernatural life; for the soul lives for God and for Heaven. Such a soul is wonderfully beautiful, as though it were clothed with a precious heavenly garment. This garment is called sanctifying grace. But if the soul becomes stained with mortal sin, it loses

its supernatural life; the beautiful garment of sanctifying grace is taken away. Now that soul is dead for God and for Heaven. The guilt of mortal sin weighs so heavily upon that soul, that it draws down the soul into the damnation of Hell. There the soul continues to live on; but this life is like an eternal death. That is indeed so terrible, that it is impossible to express it or to understand it.

Now just think again of Joseph's brothers. They grievously sinned against their brother and their old father. What did they lose by their sin?—By that mortal sin they lost their supernatural life, sanctifying grace. Now their souls were dead for God and for Heaven. What did they deserve for that mortal sin?—They brought upon themselves everlasting death and damnation. Now we know why this sin is called *mortal* or deadly: **This sin is called mortal, because it deprives us of spiritual life, which is sanctifying grace, and brings everlasting death and damnation on the soul.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).* How sad! Mortal sin brings death to the soul and casts the soul into the eternal death of Hell.

Write on the blackboard:

1. Kinds of actual sins:
   a) venial (motes); b) mortal (beams).
2. Mortal sin—a) grievous matter; b) sufficient reflection; c) full consent of will.
3. Mortal sin—death of soul—eternal death (Hell).

Synthesis. Now you know who commits a mortal sin. You need to know that for your whole life, especially for confession. Let us review it again. Are sins equally great? With what does the Saviour compare the great and the little sins? What do you call these two kinds of actual sin? What is a mortal sin? What is required in order to be guilty of mortal sin? Why did Joseph's brothers sin grievously? Why are the grievous sins called "mortal?" *(Have the pupils read*

the answers from the Catechism. Assign the lesson for the next class).

Application. 1. Now I am going to see, whether you can distinguish properly. Give me a few examples of mortal sin from the Bible History.—God said to Adam: "The day on which thou eatest of the forbidden fruit, thou shalt die the death!" That was a grievous matter, and our first parents knew fully what they were about to do, and then consented fully to the offence. Therefore their sin was mortal.—Noe drank so much, that he lost consciousness. That was indeed a grievous matter, but he did it without sufficient reflection and free will.—The wicked wife of Putiphar said detestable things about Joseph of Egypt. Why was that a mortal sin? Grievous matter, sufficient reflection and full consent of the will.—Absalom was a bad, ungrateful son. He rebelled against his father and wanted to rob him of his throne.—Mortal sin!—Judas betrayed his Divine Master. For a long time he had been carrying that devilish plan within his heart.—Peter denied his Lord and Master three times in succession.

2. Now let me take something from child life! In what Commandments can a child sin grievously?—A street arab says: "I know indeed, that I must go to Holy Mass on Sundays; but I do not want to go. I prefer to play."—Mortal sin!—A boy has received a good whipping from his father; he deserved it fully. Now what does that bad boy do? He goes out in anger and wishes all sorts of bad things to his father.—The same boy is very angry at his comrade. He has already at different times shamefully cursed and struck him, saying: "I feel just like killing him!" Therefore he has thoughts of murder just as Joseph's brothers did!—A pupil carries on detestable conversation with his comrades. He knows very well, that it is wrong; but he does not want to stop.—Neither can he distinguish properly between what is mine and what is thine. And

thus he has stolen about ten times from his poor neighbor money to the amount of ten dollars.—Still such a little child, and already such a big sinner!

Children! I have told you that we all must fear mortal sin more than death. Do you understand why?—To die without sin, will bring you into Heaven—into eternal life; to die in mortal sin, will bring you into Hell—into eternal death. "My son, flee from sins as from the face of a serpent; for if thou comest near them, they will take hold of thee" (Ecclesiasticus xxi, 2s).

LESSON III.

Venial Sin.

Catechetical Unit:

What is venial sin? L. VI, Q. 57.

Preparation. Dear children, all of God's Saints felt a deep hatred and detestation for sin, both venial and mortal. Thus Ignatius once built two large houses, where men could gather for a week or longer, in order to be away from the busy cares of the world and to work for their soul's eternal welfare, to confess their sins, receive Holy Communion and change their life for the better. This Saint had spent a great deal of money in erecting these houses. One day a certain man said to him: "You are wasting your money. After all not very many will be converted. And the most of them, after they have left the retreat, will be just as bad as they were before." But Ignatius replied: "All my expense and all my efforts will be richly rewarded, if only I can succeed in keeping man from offending God by sin, venial or mortal, even for a single day!" He knew what sin is. Let us first review the lesson on mortal sin. *(Question the pupils briefly on the foregoing lesson).*—Now you know what mortal sin is. You ought to fear mortal sin more than death. But venial

sin, too, you should fear. Therefore you must first know: When does one commit venial sin? You ought to be able to distinguish mortal from venial sin very well.

Aim. Now that is what I am going to show you: *When do you commit venial sin?*—But first I shall tell you about a very pious child of God—Catherine Emmerich.

Presentation. The parents of Catherine were poor people; but they had hearts of gold. Very early they planted the love of God and the fear of God in that child's young, tender soul. Catherine was hardly five years of age, when she had already a deep detestation of sin. Oftentimes she prayed with all her heart: "O! dear Lord, do let me die." She meant to say: I prefer to die now, for perhaps later on I may not be able to remain good; perhaps I will offend God.

Conscientious though the little Saint was, nevertheless, she committed many sins, which children are wont to commit. Once she looked through the garden fence, and saw a beautiful apple lying under a tree. Immediately she thought to herself: "My! but that must be good; if only I could have it!" But scarcely had she thought that, when she remembered: That is not right in God's sight. And immediately she felt a bitter sorrow in her heart for her sin. In penance and punishment for that she resolved: "From now on I will not eat any more apples!" And she kept her promise faithfully.—At another time a farmer woman spoke evil about her parents. Catherine was very much excited over that, and said to herself: "Now, I am going to pass by and not greet that bad woman." No sooner said than done! But meanwhile her heart beat violently. And hardly was it done, when she turned back and said humbly: "Oh, good woman! do not be angry with me. Pardon me, for having been so unkind!"

At times little Catherine was tortured with great fear. For she could not distinguish very well between

what was mortal and what was venial sin. Hence she often imagined, that she had committed a mortal sin when really it was only a question of little things. Once she quarrelled with a child; she got another child angry by calling her nicknames. Afterwards she became very much afraid; for she thought that those things were mortal sins, and the priest could not absolve such things at all. In fear and trembling she went to confession and told the confessor all very sincerely, and how she felt at heart. But the confessor spoke to her kindly and consolingly, saying: "Child, you cannot even commit a mortal sin as yet!" At these words Catherine began to weep, so much did her sin grieve her and so happy did she now feel at heart again.—But this is enough. Let us now think over this story a little.

Explanation. 1. a) Little Catherine was a good and conscientious child; but she was also a little overanxious or scrupulous. To be conscientious is right and proper; but it is not necessary to be scrupulous. What was Catherine scrupulous about?—She did not know what was a mortal and what was a venial sin. I fear, that you, too, may not be able to distinguish that very well. But as a rule that is not so very hard. Let us try!

Catherine saw the beautiful apple in her neighbor's garden and would like to have taken it. Was that a sin?—God says: "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's goods!" Consequently this little girl transgressed the Divine law. This desire was a sin, but only a venial sin, because she transgressed God's law in a slight matter, in a matter of less importance.—**Venial sin is a slight offence against the law of God in matters of less importance.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard; see the diagram below just above the synthesis).*

As a child Catherine had a somewhat obstinate and stubborn little head of her own; so she herself said later on. Therefore she got angry at once at that

farmer woman, and refused to salute her any more. But it lasted only for a few moments; her anger soon disappeared. Was that a mortal sin?—The good God has commanded: "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself!" Thou mayest not, then, cherish angry thoughts in thy heart against thy neighbor, but rather thou must forgive every one again immediately. Jesus did that: "Father, forgive them!" Therefore it was a sin for Catherine, but only a venial sin, because it was only a slight offense against the law of God; it was a matter of less importance.

Children easily get into quarrels with one another. But usually they get over it again soon, and make up again with one another. So it was, too, with regard to Catherine.—Such quarrelling and making fun of others is not pleasing to God; for children ought to live peacefully and kindly with one another. "Little children, love one another." But is that really a mortal sin?—Little Catherine, of course, thought so. But how did her confessor console her?—Children that are only six or eight years old ordinarily cannot commit mortal sin at all. Why? Because they do not understand well enough how wicked mortal sin is. But the bigger and more intelligent a child becomes, the greater does sin become. Moreover, to call others nicknames, or to make fun of others, is only a matter of less importance, a slight matter, and consequently only a venial sin. However, even venial sin is a great disgrace in God's sight.

b) Now just listen to what follows! While Aloysius was still a little boy, he used to like to be in the company of the soldiers and to watch them. On such occasions he frequently heard many rough curse words, and also many impure words. In his childish ignorance he repeated them. His guardian scolded him very severely for that, saying: "Aloysius! you must not do that any more; that is a sin." The little fellow wept bitterly over that and never did it again. What do you think: was that a mortal sin?—If bigger chil-

dren use such bad talk, it can easily be a mortal sin; for they know very well, that such talk is a grievous matter and is not allowed. But little Aloysius, as yet, did not even understand those words correctly. He did, indeed, transgress the Divine law in a matter of great importance; but he did not sufficiently understand the evil, that he was doing; he did it without sufficient reflection. Moreover, he did not speak those evil words wilfully, or with a bad will: he did not do that with full consent of his will.—**Venial sin is an offence against the law of God in matters of great importance committed without sufficient reflection or full consent of the will.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

2. I have also told you, how humbly and sincerely Catherine confessed her little fault in confession; for she was never quite at peace while in sin. To confess venial sins is the right thing to do. But confession is not even absolutely necessary. We can get rid of venial sins by contrition, by devout and contrite hearing of Holy Mass, by praying the Stations of the Cross, by taking Holy Water. Precisely for that reason *we call the smaller sins venial sins, because we can more easily obtain pardon for them, and even without confession. (Repeat together).*

3. Now you see plainly, that between mortal and venial sin there is all the difference in the world. I am going to show you that by one more example.—A child has a problem to solve. At the very beginning it makes a mistake. That mistake will go through the whole problem, will it not? And what is the result?—The answer is wrong. Another child has to write a composition. Now that child makes a mistake in spelling. Is it the same here as it is in regard to the problem in arithmetic?—The spelling mistake stands alone by itself; the composition may be perfectly good otherwise. One can see, that the child was a little careless, of course. Just so it is with regard to sinning. If a person commits a mortal sin his whole life's problem is false; and if such a one dies, he is lost. Even the fire

of Hell itself cannot burn away that disgraceful spot from the soul any more. But if a person commits a venial sin, that, too, is a mistake; but it is not so destructive. If that sinner dies and has not done penance for that fault, he will have to go to Purgatory for his carelessness. There he will have to remain and do penance, until the fire has purged away all uncleanness from the soul.

Write on the blackboard:

Venial sin—a) slight offence—matter of less importance—with reflection and consent of the will.
b) matter of great importance—without sufficient reflection—or without full consent of will.

Synthesis. Now you know venial sin too. Carefully consider the distinction between mortal and venial sin! When does one commit a mortal sin? When is one guilty of venial sin? You see, therefore: It is a venial sin, when one transgresses the Divine law in a slight matter, a matter of less importance, knowingly and wilfully; or when one breaks God's law in a more important matter, but without fully knowing what one is doing, or without fully consenting to that evil. Why are the smaller sins also called venial sins? How can one obtain pardon for venial sins? *(Have the pupils read the answer from the Catechism. Assign the lesson for the next class).*

Application. 1. Let us cite a few more examples.—God said to Moses in the desert: "Take the staff and strike the rock, and water will gush forth!" However, Moses doubted a little, as to whether God would perform such a great miracle for His ungrateful people. Why was that only a venial sin?—An Israelite gathered a little wood for himself on the Sabbath. Then the Lord commanded, that he be stoned to death (Numbers xv, 32). A little sin and yet such a great punishment! God wanted to deter His people from sin.—St. Aloysius, of whom you have heard today, also at times stole a little powder secretly from the soldiers. Why

was that, after all, only a venial sin?—While St. Philip Neri was still a little boy, he once got into a quarrel with his sister. His father gave him a severe scolding for that. Philip cried over that bitterly, and he never did it again.—A child does not go to Holy Mass on a Sunday. Why? It has a little headache.—Do not be so sensitive! Your Jesus has worn the Crown of Thorns.—Another child secretly takes a few pennies from its mother and buys sweets for itself.—Are you not ashamed? Your Jesus in His dying hour endured such a burning thirst.—A boy looks about curiously in the church and talks with his companions.—Just wait, if you do not do penance and become better, you will not escape Purgatory!—Another child calls his brother bad names.—That is not right, but it is, nevertheless, not a mortal sin. He lies to his sister.—That, of course, is not a mortal sin, but the Holy Ghost says: "A lie is a foul blot in a man" (Ecclesiasticus xx, 26).

2. Let us not close without a good resolution. Children, now just think a little over the past: Which venial sins do I like to commit most of all, and perhaps every day?—Make the resolution: "I will avoid this fault from this day forth. Dear Lord, help me to better myself!"

LESSON IV.

The Malice of Mortal Sin.
(Supplementary)

Catechetical Unit:

In what does the malice of mortal sin principally consist?

(N. B. This lesson and the following one are intended to supplement what is wanting in the Baltimore Catechism on the important doctrine concerning the malice and effects of mortal sin. The answers are taken from *"A Full Catechism of the Catholic Religion"* by Rev. Jos. Deharbe, S. J., Revised, Enlarged and Edited by the Rt. Rev. P. N. Lynch, D. D., p. 221. The catechist may pass over them in the intermediate grades, if he sees fit, and use them in the higher grades. In the present lesson we have avoided giving a unified objective presentation,

mainly on account of the first point of the question: "Sin is a grievous offense against God, our Supreme Lord." This concept does not readily lend itself to being abstracted from one example, but may be better obtained from several objective illustrations).

Preparation. Dear children, let us first review the lesson on mortal sin. *(Question the pupils briefly on the foregoing lesson).* Mortal sin makes the soul dead for Heaven and brings it down into eternal death, Hell. Thus does God punish mortal sin! There must be something really very terrible in mortal sin. Yes, there is in mortal sin such a black malice, that no man can tell it. Only he who has seen God and Heaven and Hell can tell it.

Aim. But nevertheless, I am going to try and show you: *What a person, who commits mortal sin, does to his Lord and God.* That is our task for today. But to do that, of course, we need grace from above. "O good Holy Ghost! help us to understand everything rightly. Help us to fear and detest mortal sin above all things!"

Presentation and Explanation:

1. What does he do to his Lord and God, who commits mortal sin? Let us first think a little of this question: *What is God?*

Recall the story of Solomon. This king had built the wonderful temple to God in Jerusalem. When the glorious house of God was dedicated, Solomon threw himself down before the altar of holocausts, stretched his hands out toward Heaven and prayed: "Lord, God of Israel! nothing is like to Thee in the heavens and in the earth. Is it credible, that God should dwell with men on the earth? If the heaven and the heavens of the heavens do not contain Thee, how much less this house, which I have built" (II Par. vi, 18s). What does the king mean to say?—O God! Thou art without end great and mighty. No king is like to Thee; for Thou art Supreme Lord!—*What is God?* Look up to the heavens! Consider the shining sun, the glittering moon, how they sparkle: they obey God, the Lord. Con-

sider the countless twinkling stars, great and small, how they wander in their paths: they obey God, the Lord. All creation obeys God; for He is Supreme Lord.—*What is God?* The Prophet Daniel once was permitted to look into Heaven. What does he say? "A thousand times a thousand angels served God, the Lord, and ten thousand times a hundred thousand sang unto Him a never ending hymn of praise: Holy, holy, holy!" The angels, too, obey every gesture of God; for He is the Supreme Lord.

And now I ask: *What is man?*—Nothing but a little dust, only a poor little worm, that crawls about a little while on the earth. But what does man do, when he commits a mortal sin? This miserable, good-for-nothing creature of earth says, as it were, to his Lord and God: "I know indeed, that I ought to obey Thee; but I do not want to obey. I will not allow any one to command me; I will do as I will!" If a child does not want to obey its father, it offends him, it grieves its father. Tell me then: Must not mortal sin anger and grievously offend God, the Supreme Lord? Now you see the malice of mortal sin!—**Mortal sin is a grievous offence against God, our Supreme Lord.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard; see the diagram below just above the synthesis).* God is great without end. When man offends God, he does Him such a great injustice, that of himself he can never do enough penance to satisfy for it.

2. Now listen again! Here is a good father, that has an only child, and he loves it as his own life. He does everything for that child, no sacrifice is too great for him. *Only one thing* the father desires, namely to make that child happy. But the child does not please its father, but only causes him trouble and worry. If the father says anything, that child does not want to obey, but rather answers him back in a saucy manner. Will not this ingratitude grieve that good father's heart most bitterly? Just think of Absolom: how much bitter grief did not this ungrateful son cause his good

father David!—Now just think of how good God is to us, His children. What a grace, to be a child of God! And some day we may become God's children in Heaven. God has given us our eyesight and perfect members. Every day He gives us our daily bread; for every bit of bread is from the fatherly hand of God; every little drop of water comes from His fatherly love. More than that: God has given us His dearest possession, the Divine Christ Child. Tell me yourselves: can there be any greater love! Is God not *our greatest Benefactor?* Is he not *our best Father?* Ought we not to be thankful to Him as grateful children? But what does the man do, that is guilty of mortal sin? He allows himself to grieve this best of fathers most painfully. Is not such ingratitude a disgrace and a shame?—**Mortal sin is the most shameful ingratitude to God, our greatest Benefactor and best Father.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*—Now I am no longer surprised that God has once complained: "Hear! O ye heavens, and give ear, O earth, for the Lord has spoken: I have brought up children and exalted them; but they have despised Me" (Is. i, 2). Do you understand those words of complaint?—God means the sinner. From his earliest youth God has done all sorts of good things to him; but the thankless sinner no longer wants to have anything to do with Him.

(Here I cannot help thinking of a story of old times. Caesar was the mightiest ruler in the kingdom of the Romans. Out of compassion he adopted a young man as his son. But enemies conspired against his life. Already the murderers had surrounded him. Caesar defends himself against their daggers. Then he sees amongst the murderers also a young man, his own son. Filled with sorrow Caesar cries out: "Thou too, my son!" Then he hid his face and died. The ingratitude of his son had broken his fatherly heart. Yet more detestable is the ingratitude of him, who commits mortal sin against the best of fathers in Heaven).

3. But that is not yet the whole of the malice of mortal sin. Just think a little: What would we be without Jesus? How sad our life would be, how unhappy our death! We would never be allowed to see God; there would be no Heaven for us. Now what did Jesus do?—Out of purest love God's Son became a poor child of man. Out of love He wandered upon the earth for thirty-three years. And finally out of love He endured the most bitter of sufferings and death—Why all this? In order to redeem us poor sinners from eternal death. Can there be any greater love? Jesus is really *our most amiable Redeemer.* For all this love we have promised in Baptism: "I will remain faithful to Thee until death. Rather lose all than lose Thee! For Thee will I live and die!" But what does he do, who commits mortal sin?—He will have nothing more to do with his most amiable Redeemer; sin is dearer to him than Jesus. Is that not disloyal to desert Jesus and to run after sin instead? That is truly a disloyalty, which deserves the curse of God.—**Mortal sin is a detestable disloyalty to our most amiable Redeemer, and Saviour, Jesus Christ.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

Write on the blackboard:

Mortal Sin:

a) a grievous offence against God, our Supreme Lord;
b) the most shameful ingratitude to God, our greatest Benefactor, and best of Fathers;
c) a detestable disloyalty to our most amiable Redeemer.

Synthesis. Mortal sin is a real monster. We have just seen that. Of course, we shall understand that perfectly only when we shall be permitted to see God face to face. But let us, at least, take these three points to heart: In what does the malice of mortal sin principally consist? *(Have the pupils read the answer from the Catechism (or blackboard). Assign the lesson for the next class).*

Application. 1. There are careless children, who think nothing of mortal sin. Yes, I have even heard people say: "Oh! a mortal sin is nothing; once is nonce." Is that so? To offend God, the Supreme Lord grievously, is nothing? To repay all the good of God, our best Father, with detestable ingratitude is nothing? To desert Jesus, our most amiable Redeemer, disloyally, is nothing? Some day the hour will come, when the eyes of the sinner will be opened. But I fear that then it will be too late.

2. Do you want to see clearly how very wicked mortal sin is? Well then, place yourselves under the cross and look at Jesus. Who has done that to Him? The sinner has done it. Who still dares to say, that mortal sin is nothing? For instance, to miss Holy Mass on a Sunday through one's own fault, is nothing? Children, do not commit mortal sin for any price in the world! And if the desire to sin stirs in your heart, say to yourselves at once: "No, I may not! I may not offend God. I may not be so ungrateful to my good Father in Heaven. I may not desert my Jesus. Rather die than commit a mortal sin!"

3. But what if some of you have already committed mortal sin? This is indeed bad; but all is not lost yet. Let these poor sinners at once beg God's pardon with all their heart: "Merciful God, pardon me; never will I do it again!"

LESSON V.

Mortal Sin—The Greatest Evil.

(Supplementary)

Catechetical Unit:

What are the consequences of mortal sin?

(N. B. See introductory note at the beginning of preceding lesson. Cf. Deharbe's Catechism, p. 222).

Preparation. Dear children, let us first review the lesson on the malice of mortal sin. *(Question the pupils briefly on the foregoing lesson).*—There are many

evils in the world. Just suppose, that the mother of one of you gets seriously ill and must die. Then the poor child weeps bitterly and complains: "I would rather lie out there in the cemetery with my mother!" To lose one's mother is a great evil; but it is not the greatest evil.—Soon another misfortune is added. In the middle of the night fire breaks out in your home and everything is lost. To lose one's possessions is a great misfortune; but it is not the greatest of evils. Or the father begins to get sick and can no longer earn anything. The poor children must suffer hunger. That is a great evil, is it not? But it is not the greatest evil. Another child falls down the stairs and breaks its leg. Oh, how that pains ! And now the child must lie in bed for whole weeks. Oh, that is a great misfortune! But it is not the greatest evil.—All these evils will cease some day, namely at death. But *one* evil pursues man into eternity and can make him unhappy forever—that is mortal sin.

Aim. That is what I want to show you today: *Mortal sin is the greatest of evils.* In the last class we heard, what he does to his Lord and God, who commits mortal sin. Today let us see, what such a sinner does to himself. That is so sad, that I must say: He who commits mortal sin is his own greatest enemy.—In the Bible History is narrated the story of a great king. He swam, as it were, in a sea of happiness and good fortune; but later on he became unspeakably unhappy —Solomon.

Presentation. After the death of David, Solomon ascended the throne. He loved God and obeyed the instructions of his father. He built a wonderful temple to the Lord. Therefore Solomon was the favorite of God. The Lord blessed him and made him richer and wiser than all the kings of earth.

After the temple of God had been built, Solomon erected a palace for himself. Thirteen years the builders and artists labored at it. Now everything abounded

in splendor and glory. On the walls there hung 500 golden shields. The throne sparkled with gold and ivory. Six steps led to the throne. Twelve golden lions guarded the approach to the throne. Two larger lions stood beside the throne. Such master-pieces were never yet seen in a royal palace. The entire palace glittered with golden rays. Silver was hardly noticed at all.

The fame of Solomon's wisdom and splendor spread far and wide over lands and seas. Kings from distant countries desired to see his countenance. From Arabia the Queen of Sheba came with her retinue. She placed many questions before the Ruler of Israel. His wise answers astonished her. And when she also saw his palace, she was beside herself for wonder. She said: "Thy wisdom and thy works are even greater than thy fame. Blessed be thy God, Who hath placed thee on Israel's throne!"

Thus did Solomon excel all the kings of the earth in glory. But alas! as glorious as was his rule, so sadly did it end. After he was already old, he called heathen women into his palace. He built altars on Mount Olivet to their idols. In anger the Lord said: "Because thou hast done this, I will divide thy kingdom. I will give a part to one of thy servants. But this will not be done as long as thou livest, for thy father David's sake!" Dissatisfaction spread among the people. The evils never ceased. Tortured with trials and bitterness, Solomon lamented: "O vanity of vanities! All is vanity!" Soon he died; but we do not know, whether as a sinner or a penitent.

Explanation. 1. Only with deepest sadness can we think of Solomon's end. There you see, what great evil mortal sin can cause. God had blessed the king with riches; Solomon had all that the human heart could desire. God had endowed him with a wonderful wisdom; all the world admired him. Even to this day we read his wise sayings in the Bible and must admire them. Thus Solomon was beloved of God. But did

he always remain a friend of God? Alas! the king allowed his heart to be blinded by all the splendor. What did he do in his foolishness?—The great and wise king, who had built that glorious temple to the true God, in the end—one would scarcely believe it!—had altars erected to idols. Oh! how could that man go so far astray! But so it is: if a good man falls, he can become thoroughly bad. Now it was all over with God's friendship. God did not want to have anything more to do with that disloyal king; He turned away His face with detestation from him.—Mark that well! One mortal sin does that: **Mortal sin separates us from God, and deprives us of His love and friendship.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard; see the diagram below just above the synthesis).* Is not mortal sin the greatest of evils?

2. For many years Solomon had been faithfully serving his Lord and God. In what special way did he show honor and glory to God?—He had the glorious temple erected and surrounded Divine worship with all possible splendor. At the dedication of the temple he offered thousands of oxen and sheep in sacrifice. Do you think, that God would have left all that go unrewarded? All was written down in the book of life. God would have repaid him for all these merits with a thousandfold heavenly reward. Solomon would have become rich as a king in Heaven for all those good works. However, he fell into sin. With one stroke all his merits were lost, lost was all his heavenly reward. Now the king was as poor as a beggar in God's sight. Mortal sin had robbed him of all. That is sad but true: **Mortal sin robs us of all merits.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*—Once there was a millionaire. But this enormously wealthy man allowed himself to be led astray by the evil of gambling. One evening he began to play and lost and lost again—and lost all. In the morning he was as poor as a beggar. Then despair with its claws seized him, and the poor unfortunate man also lost his reason. Still sadder is it in regard

to the sinner. A single mortal sin makes him as poor as a beggar. If the sinner rightly considered that, he would nearly lose his reason over it. Is not mortal sin the greatest of evils?

(The great Bishop Albertus of Ratisbon was also a great master. The story is told of him, that by much study and experiment he succeeded in making an artificial man, who could speak several words. One day a student came into the room. Suddenly the figure began to move and to talk. The student was so frightened over it, that in his fear he broke the figure into pieces. In sorrow the master complained, saying: "For thirty years have I worked at this and now all is in vain!" Thus too, must he complain, who commits a mortal sin: "For five, ten, twenty, thirty years have I worked and now all is in vain—all my merits are lost!")

3. Children some day inherit the possessions of their father: they have the right thereto. Therefore one can say: Children have the right of inheritance, the heirship, to their father's goods. Now children of God have the heirship to the kingdom of their heavenly Father, the heirship to the kingdom of Heaven. What a happiness is not that! Heaven is so wonderful, that St. Paul once said: "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man, which things God hath prepared for them that love Him" (I Cor. ii, 9).—As long as Solomon loved God and served Him faithfully, Heaven was open to him. But when he became unfaithful to God and sinned, Heaven was closed to him. How foolish to lightly throw away and lose the heirship to Heaven for one sin! Therefore never forget: **Mortal sin robs us of our heirship to Heaven.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*—(In the Bible History it is related,that Esau sold his heirship as first born for a mess of pottage. Soon his eyes were opened: "What have I done!" Then he howled for grief and wept bitterly. Has not he, that commits a mortal sin, much greater reason for weep-

ing? For one short vile sinful pleasure he sells his heirship to the kingdom of Heaven).—I ask you again: Is not mortal sin the greatest evil?

4. From the moment that Solomon deserted his Lord and God, God deserted him too. The king had no good fortune any longer; everywhere misfortune pursued him. God Himself threatened him with the coming punishment: "Because thou hast done that, I will divide thy kingdom!" God does not threaten in vain; how do we see that from our story?—Peace had left the land. Peace was gone forth, too, from the king's heart; the worm of a bad conscience gnawed at his soul. Continually he heard a voice within himself saying: "Thou ungrateful one, what hast thou done! God will punish thee." How did Solomon complain in the end?—The sinner generally has no peaceful hour any longer and cannot ever be happy again.—You see, then, **that mortal sin calls down upon us the judgments of God.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).* Is not mortal sin the greatest of evils?

5. But even sadder still than the punishment in this life is the punishment in the life to come. We do not know for certain, whether Solomon ever was converted. But this we do know for sure: Whoever dies in mortal sin, casts his soul into eternal death, into damnation. God will call out to such a one those frightful words: "Depart from Me! I know thee not." Can one imagine anything more terrible than to be rejected for all eternity from the face of God, to be damned for eternity to the pains of Hell? If a person considered that earnestly, he might perhaps run the risk of losing his reason. But the truth remains: **Mortal sin draws upon us eternal damnation.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*—Is not mortal sin the greatest evil?

Write on the blackboard:

Mortal sin:

a) robs us of God's friendship;
b) robs us of all merits;

c) robs us of heirship to Heaven;
d) draws upon us God's judgments;
e) draws upon us eternal damnation.

Synthesis. There now we have the whole misery and misfortune of mortal sin. He who commits mortal sin is more miserable than the poorest beggar. Show me that again from the life of Solomon. Of what did mortal sin rob him? What did mortal sin draw down upon him? What, then, are the consequences of mortal sin? *(Have the pupils read the answer from the Catechism (or blackboard). Assign the lesson for the next class).*

Application. 1. Do you know why we pray in the Our Father: "Deliver us from evil?" Mortal sin is the greatest evil; for it is able to make man unhappy for time and eternity. We have seen that clearly today. Think too of Cain, Judas.—You, too, want to be happy for time and for eternity. Therefore I must again stir up your consciences. Who of you can say: "I have never yet committed a mortal sin?" If you are still a child of God's grace, thank God a thousand times for that and resolve most firmly: Never in all my life will I commit a mortal sin! Rather death than a mortal sin! Perhaps you have already committed one mortal sin and that sin is still in your heart. What, if you had to die at this moment? Terrible thought! God's friendship lost, all your merits lost, Heaven lost —lost forever! Hell has already opened up to swallow you. Why did not God allow you to die in sin? I can only say, because God is infinitely merciful. "Have mercy on me, O God, according to Thy great mercy!"

2. Now you understand indeed, why the angel said to Tobias: "They that commit sin and iniquity are enemies of their own soul" (Tobias xii, 10). Yes, he that commits mortal sin is his own greatest enemy. I am no longer surprised, that St. Mary Magdalen de Pazzi said on her death bed: "I die. But *one* thing I have never been able to understand in my life, and I cannot understand it even now: how a person in his

right senses could ever commit a mortal sin!" I understand also why St. Blanche said to her little son Louis: "My son! you know that I love you above everything in the world. But I would prefer to see you lying dead at my feet, rather than that you should commit even one mortal sin in your life!" Little Louis remembered well those words of his mother, and became a Saint. Yes, write deeply into your hearts what is written on a certain cross: "Child of man, never commit a mortal sin!"

LESSON VI.

Venial Sin—A Great Evil.

Catechetical Unit:

Which are the effects of venial sin? L. VI, Q. 58.

Preparation. Dear children, a long time ago in the times of the pagans, before the Christian religion was on earth, there was a certain man, who was condemned to a frightful death. A dead body, black, as if it had died of the black cholera, was fastened to the body of this criminal. It was so attached that it was impossible for him to get away from it. The wretched man trembled and shook with fright, when he saw the terrible load coming, which he was to carry. When he felt the weight of it pressing upon him, the feeling of death pierced his very bones. The dreadful load was always pressing upon him. In the light of day he saw with his eyes that terrible load of black death, which he carried. In the darkness of the night the dead body was his only companion. The smell of that horrible body was most disgusting. From this load of death worms began to come; they crept into his mouth and eyes, and ears, and nostrils. Never was there such an awful sight. The people who saw it at a distance shrieked with fright and ran away. The unfortunate man himself howled with terror and pain, and his howling could be heard at a great distance. At last he

lost his senses. He fell down under the terrible load that he carried!—Unhappy sinner! You go about, day by day, tied up with death,—not the black cholera death, or the death of flesh or blood—but the real death, the death of the soul, that death that came out of Hell. Yes, mortal sin is the greatest of evils. *(Question the pupils briefly on the foregoing lesson).* But venial sin, too, is a great evil. Tell me first: When does one commit venial sin?—Why are these smaller sins called venial sins?—Now there are many Christians, who think and say: "I do not commit mortal sins; but I do not bother much about venial sins. For thereby one only gets into Purgatory!" They mean, therefore, that a little sin is only a small matter. The Saints thought altogether differently; they considered that venial sins, too, were a great evil. I am going to tell you something about that from the life of St. Alphonsus Liguori.

Aim. From that we can learn: *how we ought to fear and detest venial sins too.*

Presentation. Already as a boy Alphonsus had a great fear even of the smallest sins. One day he happened to be out in the country on a farm with other boys. The little crowd was as lively and happy as the young birds. They passed the time by playing games. Alphonsus, too, was invited to a game of ball. But he excused himself, and said: "I have never played this game; I do not know how!" However, the other boys continued to insist, until finally he consented and played with them. And see, contrary to all expectation, Alphonsus won the game. That pleased him very much. But one of the boys, who had lost, was very angry over it. In his foolish anger he made bitter remarks about Alphonsus, saying: "You lied!" and at the same time he uttered some sacred words. That was too much for the little Saint. He could not restrain himself any longer, but complained with earnest mien: "What! for this mere trifle you want to offend the good God. Here you have your money again!

May God preserve me from such sinful money! I do not want anything for the price of sin!" Then he went away and hid himself in an out-of-the-way corner of the garden. The other boys were dumbfounded at such earnestness; however, they continued their game.

It was already evening. Alphonsus did not return. The boys became uneasy over that and began to search for him. At last they found him kneeling before a statue of the Holy Virgin, God's dear Mother. He was all absorbed in prayer and did not observe the approach of the boys. At this sight the boy, who had offended Alphonsus, could not restrain himself any longer, and cried out: "Oh, what have I done! I have injured a Saint." At this cry the little boy, who was praying so devoutly, came to himself and saw his comrades. This occurrence made a deep impression on all, and they never forget it.

Explanation. 1. How do you like little Alphonsus? He was a real little Saint. From him you can learn how a true child of God ought to fear even the smallest sin.—You see, that bad boy had called Alphonsus a liar. That was unjust and sinful. Still more sinful was it, because he also spoke several curse words. But do you think, that it was a mortal sin?—No, it was not as bad as that; they were only venial sins, that he had committed. Why?—That insult hurt Alphonsus' heart, but he would gladly have borne that. Much more did it hurt him, because that boy had offended God. God has expressly forbidden all insults and cursing. But if that bad boy did it any way, do you not think that thereby he must have offended God? There you see, that *venial sin also is an offence against God. (Repeat together).* Alphonsus was so grieved over that, that he just felt like crying. Consequently he said too in holy anger: "How, for a mere trifle you want to offend the good God?" Those were beautiful words; there one can see the little Saint. His heart was filled with love for God, and therefore also with hatred and detestation for the smallest sin. That is right.

But what if a person makes little of venial sin?—A child says: "Even though I do cause my father a little displeasure, that is nothing; he will forgive me again." What do you think of such conduct? Does such a child really love its father? No indeed; and if it continues to act like that; if it goes right ahead committing venial sins, will not that child's love grow less and less?—That is the first effect of venial sins: **Venial sin lessens the love of God in our heart.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard; see the diagram below just above the synthesis).*—How will a good child think?—"No, I may not grieve my good father!" How will a true child of God think?—"No, I *may* not do that. I *will* not offend my good God for any price!" That is how St. Alphonsus always thought. Therefore the love of God, too, grew more and more in his heart. —There you see, that venial sin, too, is a great evil, because it offends God and lessens the love of God in our heart.

2. Little Alphonsus feared every sin, even the smallest sin, just as he feared a poisonous snake. Therefore, too, he was a favorite of God and God gave him many graces. Just think of how beautifully and devoutly he prayed. Not every one is able to pray so devoutly. By reason of these graces Alphonsus became purer and purer in heart, and richer for Heaven. The other boy was indeed also a child of God. But he did not bother much about venial sins. Do you think, that God loved him just as much as he loved little Alphonsus?—Surely, God would have liked to bless him also richly with graces; but that little sinner himself prevented those heavenly gifts from entering his heart. He made himself less and less worthy of God's graces. Here the rule holds: Many sins, few graces. If you grieve God with your sins, God cannot bless you with His graces.—That is the second effect of venial sin: **venial sin makes us less worthy of God's help.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

(Just picture to yourselves a father, who has two children. One of the children is a model child and obeys promptly—no sooner said than done! The other child always makes its father repeat his order a second time. Soon Christmas comes, the Christ Child comes. Which child, do you think, will receive more? Each one receives what he deserves.—There are also two kinds of children of God. Some are conscientious to the smallest details; they do not want to commit a venial sin wilfully for any price. That is how little Alphonsus was. Others, however, make light of it and always say at once: "Oh, it is only a venial sin!" That is how that other boy was. Now tell me yourselves: Whom will God love more? To whom will He give more gifts of grace?—Pure hearts—rich graces; sinful hearts—few graces!—In the sinner's heart it is oftentimes as on the heavens. If the heavens are covered with clouds, the light, warm rays of the sun cannot shine brightly and warmly in that soul.—You see again venial sin, too, is a great evil, because it keeps many of God's graces from entering into the soul and makes one less and less worthy of God's helps).

3. Scarcely had that boy uttered those sinful words, when little Alphonsus walked away; he did not want to hear any more about playing. He looked for a hidden corner and began to pray. I wonder why he prayed?—I believe, that he wanted to satisfy God for that sin, so that God would not punish that poor sinner. For with every sin there is connected a punishment; venial sin, too, draws God's punishment after it. Of course, that careless young fellow did not even think of that; he was too shortsighted to do that. But St. Alphonsus looked farther than that. He knew very well: The great God cannot put up with that from a poor, miserable little worm of the earth; He must punish that. Yes, so it is: *venial sin brings many punishments of God upon us. (Repeat together).*—But how does God punish?—God acts at times like a father

and takes the whip and punishes His children. He allows them to get sick or poor or miserable; that is often a well deserved punishment for sin. But if punishment is not inflicted now, remember that "postponed is not abandoned!" God can wait a long time, for He is eternal. At death He catches every sinner; then He will punish the little sinner, too, and will lock him up in His prison—Purgatory. There the poor soul will be chastised with fiery whips. Then will that soul complain and cry in burning pain: "Oh! why have I not believed, that venial sin is such a great evil? Now my eyes are opened. O God, have mercy on me!"—Is not venial sin a great evil?

4. When the boys found Alphonsus late in the evening praying before the statue of God's Mother, the little sinner, who had injured Alphonsus, felt fearful at heart. Now he recognized his injustice and repented of it heartily. What did he cry out?—"I have done wrong to a Saint!" Do you suppose that he committed that sin very soon again? I believe, that he lost all desire to sin. That was good; for the little sinner was already on the road that leads to serious sins. What does a person do, who gets angry for the least little thing and curses?—He becomes hateful and revengeful; yes, he can even become a murderer. There you see that a person, who makes light of venial sins, falls gradually into mortal sins. From a venial sin to a mortal sin it is often only a step. Such a person becomes weaker and weaker; he loses his power to resist mortal sin. That is the great danger of venial sin. **Venial sin weakens in us the power to resist mortal sin:** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*—Is not venial sin a great evil?

(Here the proverb holds good: Small beginnings lead to great endings! You have a beautiful red-cheeked apple, but it is a little spotted in one place. You must cut out that decayed spot at once, otherwise the decay will eat further. Venial sin is already a decayed spot in the soul.—A person has scratched

himself on a nail. He thought to himself: "Oh! that is only a trifle." After eight days he lay buried in the cemetery. Venial sin, too, injures the soul. Many a one does not pay any attention to it and continues in his carelessness, and suddenly he falls into a mortal sin. Now his soul is dead for God and for Heaven).

Write on the blackboard:

Venial sin:

a) lessens God's love in our hearts;

b) makes us less worthy of His grace;

c) weakens in us the power to resist mortal sin.

Synthesis. Little Alphonsus was a little Saint. His example ought to be for you a mirror. Have you, too, such a holy fear of venial sin? Or do you make light of venial sin as did that careless boy of our story? After mortal sin there is not any greater evil on earth than venial sin. Therefore let me warn you again: *We ought to dread and carefully avoid any sin, whether it be grievous or venial, as the greatest evil on earth.* What are the effects of venial sin? *(Have the pupils read the answer from the Catechism. Assign the lesson for the next class).*

Application. 1. *Venial sin is a great evil, because it offends God.*—You know another holy boy; he, too, like Alphonsus had the greatest dread of the smallest sin—Aloysius. His guardian merely said: "Aloysius, you have offended God!" That was enough. These words acted like a sudden clap of thunder on the little Saint.—St. Catherine of Genoa was once allowed to see how hateful a soul is in venial sin. She says: "If the ocean were a great fire, the soul would prefer to cast itself into the depths of that ocean of fire rather than tolerate a venial sin upon itself, and it would prefer to remain forever in that ocean of fire rather than see sin upon itself!" Do you now understand, why the Saints preferred to give up their life rather than offend God even with the smallest venial sin?

2. *Venial sin is a great evil,* not only because it offends God and lessens God's love in our hearts, but also *because it makes us less worthy of His help.*— We admire little Alphonsus, his pious prayers, his holy life. You think perhaps: "I would indeed like to become a Saint, but I cannot." How, you cannot? The good God has given to you, too, the talent to become a Saint. But He demands *one* thing of you: Child, fear even the smallest sin! The purer your heart, the richer will God's graces be for you.

3. *Venial sin is a great evil, because it draws down God's punishment.*—Just think of Moses! How did God punish him for his doubt?—Did you ever see a picture of Purgatory? The Poor souls are buried in the midst of a sea of fire. Over the gates of Purgatory is written: The reward of venial sin!

4. *Venial sin is a great evil, because it weakens in us the power to resist mortal sin.*—(A careless boy once took a walk close to the edge of a precipice. His companions warned him: "Be careful! otherwise you will fall down." He only laughed at them. He makes one false step and falls down into the abyss and must perish miserably. He that carelessly commits venial sins, walks along the edge of a precipice, Hell. He will surely fall into grievous sins; and how easily can he not fall into the abyss of Hell!)—How small are not the rain drops! And yet they make a little creek to become a roaring stream, that roots up trees and carries away big houses in its flood. Many venial sins do not, indeed, make a mortal sin, but they do lead to mortal sin, and finally into eternal death. Every great sinner was at first a little sinner. Therefore never forget the golden words of counsel of old father Tobias: "My son! take heed thou never consent to sin, nor transgress the commandments of the Lord thy God" (Tobias vi, 6).

5. Now just think a little over the past: How many venial sins have you already committed? Did

you not often pray badly? utter carelessly sacred words? talk at Holy Mass? obey your mother badly or not at all? quarrel with your brothers and sisters? These are all venial sins. For these you ought now to beg God's pardon: "Oh good Father in Heaven! I have so often offended Thee; I have wasted so many graces; I have deserved Thy punishment: pardon me all! From this day forth I will better myself. Let me become Thy child and remain Thy child forever!"

LESSON VII.

Pride—Humility.

Catechetical Unit:

1) Which are the chief sources of sin? L. VI, Q. 59.
2) Why are they called capital sins?
3) When do we sin by Pride?
4) What is Humility?

(N. B. Lessons VII-XII on the Capital Sins are a supplement to the brief answer of the Baltimore Catechism. These additional answers are taken from *"A Catechism of the Catholic Religion"* by Jos. Deharbe, S. J.; Revised, Enlarged and Edited by the Rt. Rev. P. N. Lynch, D. D., p. 223).

Preparation. Dear children, God wants us to avoid all sin, great and small. Every sin is a great evil. In the last class we have learned of the malice of venial sin. Let us review it. *(Question the pupils briefly on the preceding lesson).*—We were created for Heaven. But the way to Heaven is rough and steep. Many stones lie on that way—I mean the dangers of sin. Many a one stumbles, falls and is lost. Among all the sins, which men commit, there are seven, that are particularly dangerous, namely the seven Capital Sins. You all have already seen a spring. The water gushes forth from that spring in great quantities. That spring is the source from which that water takes its rise. Each one of the seven Capital Sins is just like

that spring. All other sins take their rise from these sins; they are the sources of all other sins.—**The chief sources of sin are seven: Pride, Covetousness, Lust, Anger, Gluttony, Envy, Sloth; and they are commonly called Capital Sins.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard; see the diagram below just above the synthesis).* **They are called Capital Sins, because they are so many sources from which all other sins take their rise.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

The first source of sin is Pride. There are children, who think a great deal of themselves. They imagine, that surely no other child is as good and wise and beautiful as I am. Such a child is proud or vain. How ought a child to think, if it really has some good or other?—All that I am and have, O God, is only Thy gift! Then such a child is humble. God loves Humility and detests Pride. Jesus has shown us that expressly in the beautiful parable of the Pharisee and the Publican.

(The Pharisees, what sort of people were they?—They had a great deal of religion in their mouths, but little in their hearts. Outwardly they were pious, but not inwardly; therefore they were hypocritical. Who is a Publican?—A man, that collects toll or taxes. The publicans were sometimes dishonorable and hard towards other people. Therefore they were hated by the people; to the Pharisees, especially, they were a thorn in the eye. What is a tithe?—The Jews were obliged to give to the temple a tenth part of the fruits of the fields. The tenth part (the tithe), therefore, is a tax for the house of God and for the Divine services).

Aim. Now just listen to the parable of the Lord! From that story we can learn: *how we ought to love Humility and detest Pride.*

Presentation. Two men went up into the temple to pray. The one was a Pharisee, the other a Publican. The Pharisee stood up and prayed thus within himself: "O God! I thank Thee, that I am not as other

people—extortioners, unjust, adulterers, as also is this Publican. I fast twice a week: I give tithes of all that I possess."

But the Publican standing afar off, would not so much as lift up his eyes toward Heaven, but struck his breast, saying: "O God, be merciful to me, a sinner!"

I say to you: This man went down to his house justified rather than the other: because every one that exalteth himself shall be humbled; and he that humbleth himself, shall be exalted (Luke xviii, 1s).

Explanation. 1. Let us first look at the Pharisee. He is not exactly a bad man; he did not commit very grievous sins like robbery, cheating, adultery. Yes, he even did much good.—The Jews were obliged to fast strictly only once a year; but the Pharisee used to fast even twice each week. More than that! The Jews had to give only a tenth part (a tithe) of the fruits of the fields; but the Pharisee gave a tenth part (a tithe) of all that he had. To fast and give alms is right and proper. And yet, what did Jesus say?—The Pharisee was not justified, that is, God did not forgive his sins. But why not?—You yourselves know, that many an apple is beautiful on the outside, red-cheeked, but within it is worm-eaten. So too, the good works of the Pharisee were worm-eaten—by Pride; therefore they were worthless. Do you see how God detests Pride?

Let us now consider the conduct of the Pharisee a little more closely. How did he act?—Jesus says: "He stood up." He took his stand in the temple, firmly and solemnly, as though he were a living statue of some Saint; and he placed himself right up to the front of the temple, so that all the people could see him. He was, of course, filled with conceit; he thought too much of himself, and that is a sin.—**We sin by Pride, when we think too much of ourselves.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

We see that even more clearly from his prayers. How did the Pharisee pray?—"O God, I thank Thee, that I am not as the rest of men." He thanks God, but only, in order to praise himself. He meant to say: "I am after all better than other people. What are the other people any way? They are wicked people—robbers, thieves, and adulterers." Suddenly he notices in the rear of the temple near the door the form of the Publican. He looks at him in a despising way and says: "O God! I thank Thee, that I am not as that Publican there." What does he mean to say?—He is, of course, a Publican—a good-for-nothing fellow; all the world knows that. To look down upon other people, to despise them, is that right in God's sight? No, that is Pride and therefore a sin.—**We sin by Pride, when we think too much of ourselves and despise others.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

2. Now you will easily understand, why Pride is a real source of sin. A proud man falls easily into many other sins and does not ever get out of them again very easily. He is full of envy; for he cannot bear to see others praised or rewarded. And because he cannot bear others, he becomes hateful and revengeful. He never wants to give in; he must always have his rights. He has a stubborn head; therefore he does not want to obey; he always wants to be his own master. Then too, the proud man always wants to know everything better than other people; therefore he is blind to his own faults, deaf to all good teachings or counsel. Yes, he even wants to know better than the Lord God Himself; thus in the end he even loses the Faith and perishes for ever.—*Pride is a capital sin, because it is a main source, from which many other sins take their rise. (Repeat together).*

3. Now let us look at the Publican. He did not fast as much and neither did he give as much in alms as did the Pharisee; yes, at times perhaps he even cheated a little while taking the toll or taxes. Therefore he certainly was not a Saint, but a sinner. And yet, what

does Jesus say of him?—"He went down to his house justified." Why did God forgive his sins? You see, he, too, goes to the temple to pray. But he knows very well: I am a poor sinner and have deserved God's punishments. I am not at all worthy to appear in the house of the Lord. What does he do therefore? He remains in the rear of the sanctuary near the door. Yes, he does not even want to lift up his eyes, so much does he feel ashamed of his sins. And how does he pray?—Filled with contrition for his sins, he strikes his breast and says: "O God! be merciful to me, a sinner." Did this Publican want to honor himself as the Pharisee did? No, he wanted to give the honor to God alone. He acknowledged his own unworthiness, weakness, and sinfulness, and looked upon all good as coming from God alone. That is true Humility.—**Humility is a virtue which teaches us to acknowledge our own unworthiness, weakness, and sinfulness, and to look upon all good as coming from God.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

Write on the blackboard:

1. Seven Capital Sins—sources of all other sins (2)
3. Pride—to think too much of ourselves—to despise others.
4. Humility—to acknowledge one's own unworthiness, sinfulness—to give all honor to God alone.

Synthesis. We have just considered the conduct of the Pharisee and the Publican. One is a picture of Pride, the other of Humility. One is a figure of warning, the other a model for our imitation. Now tell me: Why was the Pharisee not justified? How does one sin by Pride? Why was the Publican justified? What is Humility? Why is Pride a Capital Sin? How many Capital Sins are there? Why are they called Capital Sins? What other sins come from Pride? *(Have the pupils read the answers from the Catechism (and blackboard). Assign the lesson for the next class).*

Application. 1. The Pharisee conducted himself in God's sight, as though he were without any sin at all, but only filled with virtue. He imagined, most probably, that he deserved even during his life time a certificate of holiness for his extraordinary piety. It is still possible to find such Pharisees even among Christians. One hears such things as this: "Who can say anything evil about me? I am indeed a real upright Christian!" For such people the words hold good: "He that exalteth himself, shall be humbled, and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted." What does Jesus mean?—Whoever considers himself to be just, him God will some day humble—in Purgatory or even in Hell. Whoever considers himself a sinner, him God some day will exalt—in Heaven. Thus too, does St. James teach: "God resisteth the proud and giveth grace to the humble" (St. James iv, 6).

2. Pride is a dangerous thing. In the Sacred Scripture we even read: "Pride is the beginning of all sin" (Ecclesiasticus x, 15). Pride made the most beautiful angels to become most hateful devils. Pride made our first parents unhappy. Children, do you, too, want to be unhappy some day? Then ask yourselves: Is not Pride found also in my heart? Do you feel like esteeming yourself too highly because of your knowledge? But those talents are God's gifts. Do you feel like overestimating your virtue? Are you perhaps holy? But all the Saints were humble: they said with St. Paul: "By the grace of God I am what I am" (I Cor. xv, 10). Do you perhaps think too much of yourselves, because you happen to be good looking? The most beautiful human body will one day corrupt in the grave: "Remember, O man, that thou art dust." Or do you feel like overestimating yourselves because of your clothing? Only foolish people do that. God does not look at a beautiful dress, but rather at a pure heart.

Children, be on your guard, so that Pride may not steal into your heart like a thief. "As rust devours the iron, so Pride eats up good works" (St. Francis de Sales). "Pride cometh before the fall; disgrace follows in its path everywhere!" You ought always to remain humble and remember: "I am only a poor, sinful little worm of the earth." Mary has said: "Behold! the hand-maid of the Lord." Mary was permitted to become the Mother of God, and yet, there was not the least spark of Pride in her heart. Just look at Jesus! He is God's Son, and yet, he became a poor child of man. Yes; He even died on the shameful wood of the Cross. Learn of Jesus and often pray for a humble heart! Right now let us pray together: "O Jesus, meek and humble of Heart; make my heart like unto Thine." Do you want to please Jesus a little more? If so, resolve, but all of you: Until the next class in Christian Doctrine I am going to look at Jesus on the Cross every morning and evening and then I am going to recite this little prayer three times slowly and devoutly.

LESSON VIII.

Covetousness—Liberality.

Catechetical Unit:

1) When do we sin by Covetousness?
2) What is Liberality?

Preparation. Dear children, to please God and to save our souls we must flee Pride—we must practice Humility. Let us first review this teaching. *(Question the pupils on the foregoing lesson).* We pray in the Our Father: "Give us this day our daily bread!" What do we wish to say by those words?—Dear God, give us all days what we need for our life! That ought to be enough for us. St. Paul, too, once said: "Having food, and wherewith to be covered, with these we are content" (I Tim. iv, 8). But what if a person

earns more than he needs?—Then he ought to save, so that he may have money on which to live in his old age. You ought to begin now already to save. Who of you has a savings bank? The more you have in that little bank the more you rejoice, is that not so? But saving money can also become dangerous. Many a man saves and saves and does not want to give anything away. He becomes a miser. But stinginess, avarice, covetousness, is a sin. A Christian ought to give gladly of his possessions; he ought to be liberal, generous. Liberality is a beautiful Christian virtue.

Aim. You shall hear of that today: *how wicked covetousness is and how beautiful liberality is.*—You know a miser, who had a sad ending—Judas.

Presentation. Out of special love Jesus chose Judas to be an Apostle; yes, He wanted to make a Saint out of him. However, covetousness drove Judas into perdition.

One day our Divine Saviour was invited as a guest to dinner. Mary, a sister of Lazarus, anointed the feet of the Lord. And the whole house was filled with the odor of the ointment. Judas murmured against that, saying: "Why did they not sell that ointment for three hundred pence and give the money to the poor?" But he said that not indeed out of compassion for the poor, but because he was a miser, a covetous person. He carried the purse and was a thief.

Soon the time approached, when Jesus was to suffer and die. The Jews took counsel as to how they might arrest Jesus secretly and kill Him. However, they feared the people. Then one of the Twelve, Judas, came to the High Priests and said: "What will you give me, and I will deliver Jesus over to you?" These men rejoiced and offered him thirty pieces of silver. And Judas agreed. Henceforth Judas watched for an opportunity, how he might be able to betray Jesus to them without causing a sensation. That occasion soon presented itself.

Jesus was celebrating the Last Supper with His own. Suddenly He became very sad and said: "Amen, I say to you: one of you is about to betray Me!" Immediately after this Judas left the company. But Jesus betook Himself as usual to the Garden of Olives to pray. Then Judas appeared. A great crowd of soldiers followed him. He went up to Jesus and said: "Hail, Master!" And he kissed Him. Jesus said to him: "Friend, why art thou come hither? Dost thou betray the Son of Man with a kiss?" Then he willingly permitted them to bind Him and lead Him to the judges. The sentence read: "He is worthy of death!" When Judas heard this, despair seized hold of him. He ran to the High Priests, threw the blood money at their feet and cried out: "I have betrayed innocent blood!" Then he went out and hanged himself with a halter; but his soul went down into the abyss.

Explanation. 1. How is it possible for a man to go so far? What was the cause of the ruin of Judas? —The Apostle was possessed by the devil of covetousness. His heart was attached to money and worldly goods. Money was dearer to him than everything else on earth, yes, dearer than his Lord and God. Is that not so? For the miserable sinful sum of thirty pieces of silver he betrayed and sold his Lord and Master. One would hardly believe it. But that is how a miser is; for money everything is for sale, even his own soul. "There is not a more wicked thing than to love money; for such a one setteth his own soul to sale" (Ecclesiasticus x, 10).—Because the heart of the covetous man is inordinately attached to money, he never gets enough of it either. He is like to a man sick of the fever, who continually wants to drink. But the more he drinks, the greater does his thirst become. The covetous man would always like to have more and more. But the more he gets, the more burning does his thirst become. Money, money, money! The money bag is his idol.—**We sin by covetousness, when we inordi-**

nately seek and love money or other worldly goods. *(Repeat together; use the blackboard; see the diagram below just above the synthesis).*

Whoever sets his heart upon money has no heart for others. Just look at Judas! Mary anointed Jesus with precious ointment. Judas saw it and became angry at it. What did he say?—"That money could have been given to the poor!" Therefore he had a good heart after all, did he not? No, he said that only out of hypocrisy; he was not at all in earnest. He was only thinking of all that money—300 pence! He would like to have kept that for himself; he would not have given the poor a single penny of it; for his heart was as hard as a stone. If a poor person were dying of hunger before his eyes, I believe, that he would have let him die without any qualms of conscience.—**We sin by covetousness, when we are hard-hearted to those who are in distress.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*—But what has Judas now with all his money? He could not take a single penny with him. But covetousness took everything away from him: money, life and even eternal life. Yes, covetousness is really a great thief.

2. Now you can easily understand why covetousness is a capital sin. We see that very plainly in Judas. To what did covetousness drive him?—Judas had oftentimes kept back part of the money. Thus he became a thief and a cheat. Whoever steals also likes to lie. Very naturally too, in order that his disgrace may not become known. More than that! Already Judas had the devilish plan in his heart of betraying Jesus. Nevertheless, he came to the Last Supper, as though he were as innocent as a little child. The miserable hypocrite! But the very height of malice was reached, when he betrayed his Lord and Master for filthy, sinful money. To be sure, thereby he gambled away his own soul to the devil. And what was the end? —Judas cried out in despair: "My sin is too great! God cannot forgive me any more!" And then he com-

mitted suicide. So far can a person go, when he becomes a slave of money! Do you now see, why covetousness is a capital sin? Covetousness is a main source, from which many other sins take their rise.

3. By covetousness Judas became eternally unhappy. If he had been liberal and generous; if he had given gladly to the poor, he could have been a Saint in Heaven. For one can get everything for money, even Heaven. Do you understand what I mean? —Jesus has said: "What you do to the least of My brethren, you do to Me" (Matt. xxv, 40). Do you hear? If you give to a poor child even only a little piece of bread, out of Christian Charity, you have given it to Jesus Himself. Do you think, that Jesus will let that go unrewarded? To do good to others does good to one's own soul. And when finally our time comes to die, the pious alms we performed become, as it were, alive again and are turned into Guardian Angels, who will accompany the soul into eternity and be with it like so many intercessors at the judgment. Then Jesus will say: "I was hungry and you gave Me to eat. I was thirsty and you gave Me to drink. I was naked and you clothed Me. Now enter with Me into My kingdom!" So great therefore will the reward some day be if we are liberal and generous for Christ's sake!—**Liberality is a virtue, which inclines us to use our property for the relief of the needy, or for other laudable purposes.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

Write on the blackboard:

1. Covetousness—to seek inordinately for and to love money—to be hard-hearted to the needy.
2. Liberality—to give freely to the needy and other laudable purposes.

Synthesis. The unhappy Apostle Judas is for us an example of warning, that says: Be on your guard against covetousness! How does a person sin by covetousness? The opposite of covetousness is liberality.

Who is liberal? Why is covetousness a capital sin? Into what sins does a covetous person fall? *(Have the pupils read the answers from the Catechism (and blackboard). Assign the lesson for the next class).*

(N. B. Other pertinent questions—for example, lying, stealing, cheating, suicide, etc.—might be briefly reviewed and assigned for repetition).

Application. 1. It is only with fear and trembling that we can think of Judas. But even now there are still Judas-souls, who zealously adore their money bags. But such a stingy person is really a poor soul, even though he were the richest man in the world. Why? Suddenly death will come from behind and give him a push, so that he will fall into the grave. And then what will become of his poor soul? It will be drawn downwards, for money is so heavy—it will draw the soul downwards into the abyss of Hell. That is a very terrible thing. Would one of you like to be some day or other such a poor soul? No, you say. But just be careful! These weeds, covetousness, are already found in many a young heart. There are children, that do not want to give anything away; they prefer to let things go to ruin, rather than to give something of their possessions to their brothers and sisters or to other children. Do you, too, perhaps act like that? If so, it is high time to tear up those weeds together with the roots from your hearts. But how ought you to do that? Just think of how beautiful it is to be liberal! Old Father Tobias was himself poor; but nevertheless, he was tireless in doing good to others. And he impressed a very beautiful word of warning upon his son's heart: "My son! give alms out of thy abundance and turn not away thy face from any poor person: for so it shall come to pass, that the face of the Lord shall not be turned from thee. If thou hast much, give abundantly; if thou hast a little, take care even so to bestow willingly a little" (Tobias iv, 7s). And the angel said to the younger Tobias: "Prayer is good with fasting and alms more than to lay up treasures of gold" (Tobias xii, 8).

2. Now many a child will most likely say to itself: "Why, I myself have nothing; what shall I give away?" Is that really so? Can you not give anything away at all? See, now and then surely you receive a little present. Bring a little happiness to some poor child or other. Happiness shared with others is double happiness. Every month, too, the Christ Child comes to you and asks for an alms for the poor heathen children. Give those few pennies willingly! But do not have your mother give them for you. Deny yourselves a little as regards candies and other sweets; in God's sight that is worth its weight in gold. And if it seems hard for you to do that, look at Jesus on the Cross! He gave up everything for you out of purest love and are you unwilling to give anything for love of Him? Have you really such an ice cold heart? Neither may you suppose, that a single penny of that will be lost. See, the dear Lord God has established a savings bank. Whatever you place in it during your earthly life, you will get repaid in the other life many hundredfold again. In the eyes of the world these few pennies are indeed only a little copper money, but in the sight of the dear Lord God out of every penny will be made a shining gold piece. Just see, how rich you can become for Heaven! "There is no greater alms, than that which a poor person gives to another poor person!"

LESSON IX.

Anger—Meekness.

Catechetical Unit:

1) When do we sin by Anger?
2) What is Meekness?

Preparation. Dear children, Sultan Saladin had amassed untold wealth for himself and guarded it with most scrupulous care. But soon the hour of death

came, and he felt now only too plainly that all these treasures and goods were worthless to him. Therefore he called a herald and gave him a white linen cloth, which had been chosen to be his winding sheet, saying at the same time, that he commanded him to fasten that sheet to a pole, and to carry it through the big residential sections of the city, and to shout out the message: "Behold! that is the entire wealth, which Sultan Saladin will take with him into the grave!"—Oh! if only the covetous of this world would take these earnest words to heart and understand their deep meaning!—Let us first review the lesson of covetousness and liberality. *(Question the pupils briefly on the preceding lesson).*

Lust—Chastity.

The third capital sin is called *Lust.* You have already heard about that sin in the lesson on the sixth and ninth Commandments of God. Let us review only a few of the more important points.

Our body is a little house of God. God, the Father, has built up that house and God, the Holy Ghost, has consecrated it. When did that happen?—Of course, this body must some day die and corrupt in the grave; and then it is to arise from the grave and is to stand before the throne of God. Therefore too, a Christian must keep his body holy. Those parts of the body, which we always keep covered, even while bathing, we may not look upon without necessity, and neither may we touch them for bad pleasure. Yes, we may not even think of them with wicked pleasure. All that God has forbidden. What does the sixth Commandment of God forbid?—Why ought we especially to guard ourselves against impurity?—Yes, this sin is a disgrace before God and men and brings us down into perdition. Just recall the story of impure and shameless Cham.—The curse of God struck him. Think of Sodom and Gomorrha.—God sent down from Heaven a rain of fire and brimstone, to burn out these

sins of Hell.—Why? Because these wicked people indulged in immodest or impure thoughts, desires, words, deeds. They were guilty of Lust.—**We sin by Lust, when we wilfully indulge in immodest or impure thoughts, desires, words, or actions.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard; see diagram below just above the synthesis).*—But why is Lust a capital sin? —This sin is a real source of poison. An impure person easily falls into all sorts of wickedness. He no longer wants to confess sincerely. He becomes saucy to his parents. He also leads others into impurities. Not infrequently, too, he loses his Faith; then he no longer has any pleasure in life and finally puts an end to his own life. And then?—Then he must burn in the fires of Hell, but—how terrible!—he will never be consumed.—*Lust is called a capital sin, because it is a main source from which many other sins take their rise. (Repeat together).*—The opposite of Lust is the beautiful virtue called *chastity.* Just think of the lovely life of St. Aloysius! All of God's Saints loved and practiced that angelic virtue. How careful and zealous they all were to put down at once every inclination to impurity or immodesty! That is the mark of a chaste person.—**Chastity is a virtue, which subdues all impure inclinations and desires by which modesty is violated.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*—St. Bridget once said to a certain young man, who had fallen into all sorts of sins of Lust: "One thing is wanting to you, as a strong shield, which you ought to carry on your left arm always,—near to your heart, to keep away all the fiery darts of Lust. This shield is the pious meditation on the Sufferings of Christ!"— Yes indeed; if only you would think of all that Jesus has suffered for your sakes, you would not have to fear the attacks of the devil of Lust. On this shield is painted the Face of Christ with the Crown of Thorns, and also all the other instruments of His Sacred Passion. Looking at that in the hour of trial, would you not put down at once every temptation to Lust?—

Anger—Meekness.

Now we come to a sin, which we find as commonly as the weeds that cover many a field: I mean the sin of *Anger*.—In the fifth Commandment of God you learned: God forbids us to injure our neighbor as regards the life of his body or the life of his soul. But more than that! God also forbids everything, that leads or seduces to evil deeds: such as anger, hatred envy, quarrelling, insulting or curse words. Anger leads to wicked deeds. That is only too true. There are examples enough of that. The Bible History, too, tells us many an example.—Cain murdered his brother in anger. Esau, too, nearly became a murderer of his brother in a fit of anger. But let us stop here.

Aim. From his life you can learn: *how you ought to conquer Anger and practice the beautiful virtue of Meekness.*

Presentation. Father Isaac had two sons. The first-born was hairy and rough in appearance, and was called Esau. The other was gentle and meek, and his mother called him Jacob. The boys grew up. Esau was a hunter and tilled the fields, Jacob became a shepherd. Isaac loved Esau, because he liked to eat of the prey or the game taken by Esau in the hunt. The mother loved the quiet Jacob.

One day Jacob cooked a mess of pottage. Esau just happened to return from hunting. He said to his brother: "Give me some of this red pottage, for I am very tired!" Jacob replied: "Sell me in return thy first birth-right!" Esau answered: "Lo! I die of hunger; what will the first birth-right avail me?" And Jacob said: "Swear, therefore, to me!" Esau swore, and sold his birth-right. And taking bread and the mess of red pottage, he ate and drank and went away, making little of having sold his birth-right.

Isaac was already old and his eyes were dim and blind. Therefore he called his eldest son, Esau, to himself and said: "Thou seest, that I am old, and

know not the day of my death. Take thy arms, thy quiver, and bow and go abroad; and when thou hast taken something by hunting, make me savoury meat thereof, as thou knowest I like, and bring it, that I may eat; and my soul bless thee before I die." Esau went out at once.—

Rebecca had been listening secretly. Therefore after Esau had gone forth, she said to Jacob: "I have heard all that thy father has spoken to Esau. My son! listen to my cousel: Go thy way to the flock, and bring me two kids of the best, that I may make of them meat for thy father, such as he gladly eateth. And when thou hast brought it in and he hath eaten, he will bless thee!" Jacob went out and brought the kids. Rebecca prepared the favorite dish for Isaac. Then she brought out the best garments of Esau and put them on Jacob. She covered Jacob's neck and arms with the skins of the kids. Then she gave him the meat, to bring to his father. The old father did not recognize him and blessed him.

Scarcely had Jacob gone out, when Esau returned from the hunt. He prepared and brought in the game he had taken, and said to his father: "Father, arise, eat and bless me!" Isaac asked: "Why, who art thou?" He heard the answer: "I am Esau, thy first-born!" The father was struck with fear and called out in astonishment: "Who is he then who even now brought me venison that I have taken, and I ate before thou comest? And I have blessed him, and he shall be blessed!"

When Esau had heard this, he cried out in a loud voice: "Now Jacob hath supplanted me the second time. My first birth-right he hath taken away before; and now this second time he hath stolen away my blessing!" In his anger he went out and threatened, saying: "I will kill my brother!"

The mother warned Jacob: "Arise, my son! and flee to my brother Laban. Remain there until thy

brother's anger has abated. Then I shall tell thee what to do!" For twenty years did Jacob remain with Laban. Then he returned home again. Meanwhile Esau had forgiven him all. He hastened out to meet his brother, and embracing him, kissed him and wept.

Explanation. 1. Jacob took away from his brother the fatherly blessing. That was, of course, unjust and a sin. But Esau wanted even to take his brother's life. Was not that much more unjust and sinful? Was that brotherly love?—Esau ought to have openly accused Jacob of his injustice, but then he should have forgiven him again. But Esau was rough mannered and could not conquer his passions. Scarcely had he heard of the deceit of his brother, when things began to boil and steam within him, just as when one pours water on glowing coals. Immediately he became terribly excited, exasperated, against his brother. Then the storm broke loose.—How do you suppose he acted?—He clenched his fists and gnashed his teeth in anger, and a sinister fire like lightning flashed from his eyes. More than that! Esau was all beside himself and screamed and howled like an insane man; yes, he even allowed himself to be carried away with revenge and wanted to cool his anger in the blood of his brother.—**We sin by anger, when we are exasperated at that which displeases us, fly into a passion, and suffer ourselves to be carried away with a violent desire of revenge.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).* Anger is able to make a man become like a wild animal and a real devil.

(But not every anger is sinful. There is also a *just* and a holy anger. When Moses came down from the mountain and saw the idolatry of his people, he threw down the tables of the Law on the ground, so that they broke to pieces. That was a holy anger; that comes from the love of God.—Jesus once drove out the desecrators of the temple. He said in holy anger: "My house is a house of prayer! But you have made it a

den of thieves." He did that from the love of God and out of zeal for God's honor).

2. Anger is a capital sin. We see that plainly in the case of Esau. What did he want to do in his anger? —"I will kill him!" he threatened. Anger would almost have made of him a murderer of his brother. An angry person does not know any longer what he is doing; he is capable of almost anything.—Often from anger there comes a hellish hatred. As often as Esau thought of his brother, dark thoughts of murder would rise again in his soul. What else does an angry person do?—He utters curses and maledictions against his enemy; even blasphemies come forth from his mouth. I wonder, whether Esau did not act like that too in his anger. An angry person also does violence to his own life. How?—Many a person gets sick because of his anger; yes, it has often happened that a person in his anger has fallen down and died instantly. Anger breaks the thread of life. "Envy and anger shorten a man's life," as the Scripture says (Ecclesiasticus xxx, 26).—Now you all see, why anger is a capital sin. *Anger is a capital sin, because it is a main source from which other sins take their rise. (Repeat together).*

3. Jacob was of a different disposition than Esau; he was quiet and mild. Meekness is a beautiful virtue, so beautiful that Jesus says: "Blessed are the meek!" Of course, meekness has to be learned by practice. If one does something against a meek person, it hurts him too in his heart; perhaps his blood begins to boil. He feels something within himself, that burns like fire. But he puts out the fire again at once; he conquers his anger. And when something or other does not go according to his will, anger and vexation become alive and active; but he does not allow that anger to come out. Just as one makes a wild horse tame by means of the bridle, so too a meek person tames his anger.—**Meekness is a virtue, which suppresses all desire of revenge, and any motion of unjust anger and displeasure.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

Write on the blackboard:

1. Anger—to fly into a passion—to be carried away by a violent desire of revenge.
2. Meekness—to suppress all desire of revenge and motions of unjust anger and displeasure.

Synthesis. Remember well what we have learned today about anger. Esau is an example of warning. Anger is hurtful for body and soul and has already made many a one unhappy. How does one sin by anger? Why is anger a capital sin? Into what sins does an angry person fall? What is Meekness? *(Have the pupils read the answers from the Catechism (or blackboard). Assign the lesson for the next class).*

Application. 1. Now look a little into your own heart. I am afraid, that these weeds of sin, anger, are already growing up in rank abundance in your heart. There are children, that have a very stubborn head. If things do not go at once according to their wishes, they become furious and begin to scold and stamp with their feet or even to curse. If they have to wait a little or receive a well-deserved punishment, at once they are all wrought up over it. Just wait a little, some day your anger will be driven out of your heart most thoroughly! Do you know where?—Purgatory must some day burn out your anger.

2. The great poet Dante has written a beautiful poem, in which he sings of Purgatory. He tells us how they, that easily get angry, are punished there. They are enclosed in a thick smoke and in darkness. But in the distance one hears a lovely hymn—Agnus Dei—Behold the Lamb of God! That means: Look at the meek Lamb of God, Jesus: and you have been so passionate, so given to anger! Now then burn and do penance! Children, rather look now at the Lamb of God! How meek has not Jesus been at all times! Like a lamb He was led to the slaughter, to the awful death of the Cross; but there was not the tiniest spark of anger against His deadly enemies in His Heart, no bit-

ter and wicked words came forth from His mouth. Even while dying He prayed so beautifully: "Father forgive them!" Therefore could Jesus indeed give us that beautiful counsel: "Learn of Me; for I am meek and humble of Heart!" If, then, some time or other anger again begins to rise within you, place yourselves before a Crucifix, look into the eyes of the dear Saviour and say the beautiful little prayer: "O Jesus! meek and humble of Heart: make my heart like unto Thine!"

LESSON X.

Gluttony—Temperance.

Catechetical Unit:

1) When do we sin by Gluttony?

2) What is Temperance?

Preparation. Dear children, a certain pious farmer named Fridolin had a hired man, that was very much given to anger and during those fits of temper this man used to utter the most wicked language. Fridolin admonished him frequently to conquer his unruly passion for the love of God. But the servant replied: "I cannot do it; men and animals cause me such trouble!" —One morning Fridolin said to him: "Matthias! just look at this shining new dollar. I will give it to you, if you remain patient the whole day and do not speak an angry word." The hired man agreed gladly to this offer. But the other servants agreed secretly with one another, that they would try to keep him from earning that money. All that they did that day was aimed at making him angry. But Matthias bravely resisted his angry inclinations, so that they could not catch him uttering a single angry word. In the evening Fridolin gave him the dollar, saying: "You ought to be ashamed of yourself for being able to conquer your anger so well solely for the sake of a miserable piece of money, while at the same time you refuse to do that for the

love of God!" The servant changed his conduct for the better and became a very good and meek man. Let us review the lesson on Anger. *(Question the pupils briefly on the preceding lesson).*—We must eat and drink, otherwise we cannot live and work. Thus has God arranged things. But God also wills, that we should observe the right measure in eating and drinking. Whoever does that is temperate. He that oversteps the right bounds in the matter of food and drink is intemperate or gluttonous. Gluttony is against God's will. Therefore Gluttony is a sin, and indeed a capital sin, which has already made many a one unhappy.

Aim. *A Christian ought always to be temperate in eating and drinking.* That is what I am going to teach you today and at the same time I shall show you: *whither intemperance or gluttony leads.* Our Blessed Saviour Himself has told us a very instructive parable in this regard.

Presentation. Once there was a rich man. He clothed himself in purple and fine linen and feasted sumptuously each day. There was also a poor man named Lazarus. He lay before the door of the rich man's house, all covered with sores. Gladly would he have eaten the crumbs that fell from the rich man's table, but no one gave them to him. The dogs, too, came and licked his sores.

Now the poor man died and was carried by angels into the bosom of Abraham. The rich man died also and was buried in Hell. When he raised his eyes from this place of torments, he saw Abraham in the distance and Lazarus in his bosom. Then he cried out imploringly: "Father Abraham! Have mercy on me and send Lazarus to me to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue; for I am suffering great pains in these flames!" Abraham replied: "Remember my son! that in thy life time thou didst receive good things, but Lazarus evil things. Now he is being comforted and thou art being tortured. Moreover, be-

tween us and thee a great chaos is fixed so that we cannot go over to you nor you come hither!"

Thereupon the rich man said: "Then I pray, thee, Father, only send Lazarus into my father's house to my five brothers, in order to warn them, so that they may not also come to this place of torments!" Abraham answered: "They have Moses and the Prophets: let them hear them!" He replied: "No, Father Abraham! But if some one were to come from the dead, they would certainly do penance." Abraham said: "If they do not hear Moses and the Prophets, neither will they believe, if some one were to come from the dead." *(Show the children a large picture of this scene).*

Explanation. 1. St. Paul once said, that there are men, "whose god is their belly" (Phil. iii, 19). He is perfectly right. The rich man of our story was just such a man. To eat and to drink eagerly that was his daily service of God. What does Jesus say in the parable?—"He feasted sumptuously each day." He lived in the finest style every day. At his meals there were the daintiest of foods and the most precious of wines, as though every day were a wedding day. Most likely the rich man thought just as all worldlings think: "One must enjoy life while there is still time; therefore I will eat and drink accordingly to my heart's desire!" Do you see? This man was a glutton. Even though he had already eaten enough, nevertheless, he was not yet satisfied; he only stopped, when he could not eat any more. That is gluttony.—**We sin by gluttony when we eat too much.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard; see the diagram below just above the synthesis).*

A glutton or an intemperate man not infrequently acts just like the irrational animals. Did you ever watch a dog? He gulps everything down greedily, does he not? So too, does a gluttonous or an intemperate man eat quickly and greedily—in an inordinate manner; and particularly his favorite dishes he devours with real greedy hunger. Then too, he longs for eat-

ing and drinking out of times. But a man, particularly a Christian, ought to do everything with reason; he ought to eat, too, with reason.—**We sin by gluttony, when we gulp down food in a greedy manner—in an inordinate manner, and when we long for eating and drinking out of times.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

But that rich man was also a drunkard. A reasonable man drinks, when he is thirsty. But that rich man drank more than his thirst called for. When his reason and his conscience told him: Now stop! Be temperate!—he, nevertheless, did not stop; he continued to drink, until he hardly knew any more, whether he was a man or an animal. Is that right in God's sight? Is not that disgraceful? Yes, it is a disgrace and a grievous sin.—**We sin by gluttony, when we drink too much, or in an inordinate manner.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

2. Soon God's punishment came upon that rich man—he died. As he lived, so did he die; he was buried in Hell. But from what sort of a sickness, do you suppose, he died?—I believe, from too much eating and drinking. A gluttonous or intemperate man gradually eats and drinks himself to death; he becomes a self-murderer. What a sin! On the grave of the gluttonous man one could write in all truth: "Here lies a rich man; he ate and drank himself to death!" That would not have been a lie. There you see already the source of poison.—But that is not yet all. A gluttonous or an intemperance man is nearly always also an impure man. Again! a gluttonous man is also a lazy man; for a full stomach does not want to work. We are not yet finished. How does many a drunken person act?—He drinks away his health and ends in the hospital. He drinks up his fortune and must go to the poor house. He destroys his reason by his intemperance and has to go to an insane asylum. In his drunkenness he begins to curse and to quarrel; finally he gets to fighting and commits murder, and he is put

into jail.—But do you know, what the very worst of all is? Generally an intemperate person is incorrigible; he can no longer give up drinking. The drunkard is a slave of his wicked passion. It is just the same as when one slowly enters into the water. At first the water is only up to one's ankles; then to one's knees, then to the waist, then to one's mouth, then only one step more—and such a person drowns. Thus does a drunkard sink more and more deeply and finally he perishes forever. For we read in God's Word: "Drunkards shall not possess the kingdom of Heaven" (I Cor. vi, 10).—You see for yourselves, that in the swamp of gluttony or intemperance there thrive many poisonous weeds, many sins. Therefore *gluttony is a capital sin, because it is a main source, whence many sins take their rise. (Repeat together).*

3. While the rich man was reveling in abundance of wealth, the poor man lay before his door and was suffering the pangs of hunger. Lazarus had no desire at all for the precious food and good wines of the rich man. I am sure, that he would not have felt at ease at all at the table of Dives. With what, do you suppose, he would have been satisfied?—See: he wanted only enough to be able to still his hunger. That is *Temperance.* Of course, God does not want, that we live so poorly and frugally; but He does want us to be temperate in eating and drinking. A temperate man eats and drinks only as much as is necessary for his body. He satisfies his hunger and quenches his thirst, and then he stops. Neither is he too choice in his food, but he eats what he gets. He thinks to himself: Hunger is the best cook.—**Temperance is a virtue, by which we control ourselves, especially our appetite for eating and drinking.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

Write on the blackboard:

1. Gluttony—to eat and drink too much—to eat in an inordinate manner—to long for food and drink out of times (inordinately).

2. Temperance—to control one's appetite in eating and drinking.

Synthesis. Gluttony or intemperance is a sin and leads to many sins; yes, it easily leads us into perdition. We have seen that today in the story of Dives. How does one sin by gluttony? Why is gluttony a capital sin? Into what sins does gluttony lead? Who is a temperate person? *(Have the pupils read the answers from the Catechism (or the blackboard). Assign the lesson for the next class).*

Application. Perhaps many a child has already thought to itself: "I, too, would like to have it as nice as the rich man! To eat every day and to drink according to one's heart's desires, that must be happiness!" But what has the rich man now from all his eating and drinking? He is burning in Hell and must burn for all eternity. He does not receive even a little drop of water to quench his burning thirst! I ask: Who of you would like to exchange places with him now? But poor Lazarus is now enjoying himself in Heaven. Again I ask: Who of you would not like now to exchange places with him? Therefore be temperate in eating and drinking! We do not live in order to eat, but rather we eat, in order to live. Just remember well, that your body is a little, living temple of God, and this body is some day to be set up like a living statue in God's temple, in Heaven! This body, too, is to be a living dwelling for Jesus in Holy Communion. May we desecrate this body and violate it by gluttony? Also when eating and drinking remember: I am a Christian! I am a child of God! I am some day to become a Saint in Heaven. Therefore I must also eat and drink in a Christian manner, as St. Paul says: "Whether you eat or drink, or whatever else you do: do all things to the glory of God" (I Cor. x, 31). Say a pious act of grace each time at meals; at the same time look up to Jesus on the Cross and think: Torturing thirst like a burning fire glowed within Him

in that last hour, so that He cried out: "I thirst!" What penance your Saviour did for sins of gluttony!

LESSON XI.

Envy—Brotherly Love.

Catechetical Unit:

1) When do we sin by Envy?
2) What is Brotherly Love?

Preparation. Dear children, our dear Mother, Holy Church, reminds us every Friday and throughout the season of Lent of the duty of curbing our unruly appetites for food and drink. She teaches us also thereby to practice the virtue of Temperance. Let us review the lesson on Gluttony and Temperance. *(Question the pupils briefly on the preceding lesson).*—You already know the vice of Covetousness. Do you also know Envy? Envy is a common sin of children. But children generally cannot distinguish Covetousness and Envy. These two sins are indeed related to each other, but they are also distinct from each other.—You all know, that in the world there are rich and poor, high and low. Some are esteemed a great deal, while others are not thought much of. Some are healthy, others sick. God has so arranged things. Now a person thinks to himself: "If only I, too, were rich!" Is that already a sin?—This wish is not good, but neither is it bad. Now a rich person loses all his possessions. Then a poor man says: "That serves him right; now he, too, knows what it means to be poor!" Is that right? Is that Christian love? That is *Envy* and a sin; yes, even a *capital sin.* He ought to have compassion with that unfortunate person; for love demands that we desire only the good of others. This virtue is called Christian Charity, or *Brotherly Love.*

Aim. I must show you that a little better: *how unchristian Envy is and how beautiful Brotherly Love is.*

Presentation. The people of Israel were once in battle with the Philistines. It happened that from the camp of the enemy a man came forth, whose name was Goliath. He was a giant and wore a terrible armour. In an insulting manner he called out to the Israelites: "Choose a man from your midst: let him come out and do battle with me! If he defeats me, we shall be your servants. But if I conquer him, you shall be our slaves!" Thus did he shout out every morning and evening for forty days. Saul and all the men heard this insult, but no one dared to accept the challenge to the duel.

One day David, too, heard the challenge. In God's name he went forth to meet the giant and cut off his head. There was great rejoicing over that among all the people. But Jonathan, the king's son, entered into friendship with David; for he loved him as his own life.

Saul with his army turned their steps homewards. David had to accompany the king. From all the cities and towns the women came out and sang: "Saul hath slain his thousands, but David his tens of thousands!" That grieved the king. In anger he said: "To David they have given ten thousand, but to me only a thousand. What is wanting to him yet except the kingly honor?" From that time on the king could not look David straight in the face any more.

At home a great fit of melancholy fell upon Saul. David played before him on the harp. Suddenly Saul raised the spear and hurled it at David, in order to fix him to the wall. However, David stepped aside and escaped. Soon afterwards he placed the youth at the head of 1000 soldiers. Saul secretly hoped, that David would fall in battle with the Philistines. David conquered the enemy and cleared the land of them. Therefore the people loved him and his name was honored in all the land. Henceforth Saul openly urged Jonathan and his servants to murder David. But Jonathan said: "Father, do not commit sin against thy servant

David! He hath risked his life for thee and hath slain the Philistine!" Saul allowed himself to be calmed and swore: "As truly as the Lord liveth, he shall not die!"

Soon afterwards David again won a great victory over the Philistines. For jealousy and envy the king fell again into melancholy. David appeared before him and played. Then Saul again threw his spear at him. David dodged it and the spear entered the wall. That same night David escaped and hid himself from the wrath of the king.

Explanation. 1. Little David was already a great hero; for he killed the giant Goliath. Therefore the simple shepherd boy became the favorite of the whole people. What honor did they show him?—The women of Israel greeted him jubilantly as a victor with songs and the playing of harps. What did they cry out?—"Saul hath killed his thousand, but David his tens of thousands!" They meant to say: David conquered the giant; he is equal to ten thousand men. Thus all the people were filled with joy. Only one was filled with sadness, the king. Why? He could not bear to see that the simple shephard boy was esteemed more than he, the king, was. Therefore he became sick for envy and displeasure. From that hour forth he no longer spoke a kind word to David and gave him no friendly look. Do you see? The king begrudged David the love and the praise of the people. That is how an envious person acts: he repines at his neighbor's good and is sad when his neighbor is in possession of temporal or spiritual blessings. That is a sin. **—We sin by envy, when we repine at our neighbor's good and are sad when he is in possession of temporal or spiritual blessings.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard; see the diagram below just above the synthesis).*

Envy almost made the king a murderer. What did Saul do in his fierce envy and anger?—He threw his spear at David; but he missed him. Then the king

sought to destroy David in other ways. What plan did he think out?—Saul sent David against the enemy. What did he hope for?—Perhaps he will be killed? The king would have been filled with joy over the injury to David, if David had fallen in the battle. There we have envy again. An envious person rejoices, when his neighbor is deprived of temporal or spiritual blessings; he wishes his neighbor evil. Is that right in God's eyes?—**We sin by envy, when we rejoice when our neighbor is deprived of temporal or spiritual blessings.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*—Let us now repeat the entire answer: **We sin by envy, when we repine at our neighbor's good, and are sad when he is in possession of temporal or spiritual blessings, and rejoice when he is deprived of them.**

2. Do you know also, why envy belongs to the capital sins?—Just look upon Saul! Out of envy he became the deadly enemy of David; like hellish fire hatred glowed in his heart. Out of envy he became sick. Out of envy he cherished thoughts of murder. Because of envy he would nearly have become a murderer. But God's hand protected His servant David. Thus does envy lead to many other sins; it is a real source of poison in one's heart.—*Envy is a capital sin, because it is a main source, from which many other sins take their rise. (Repeat together).*

3. Jonathan was entirely different from his father; he had a noble heart. After David had conquered the giant, did he envy him too as Saul did? No, he rejoiced with David; yes, he even became his bosom friend. The king's son loved the simple shepherd boy as his own life. How did he show that so beautifully? —Saul wanted to kill David. Jonathan became very sad over that; that hurt him deep down in his heart, just as though he himself had to die. He condoled with David. What then did he do?—Out of sympathy he went to the king and begged him to spare David, his friend. That was noble of the king's son. He did not feel the smallest spark of envy in his heart. No, he

thought only of the good of his friend and wished him only well; he rejoiced over David's blessings and was filled with sadness over his misfortune. The opposite of envy is Brotherly Love.—**Brotherly Love is a virtue, by which we wish every one well, and sincerely rejoice and condole with our neighbor.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).* St. Paul once said: "Rejoice with them that rejoice, and weep with them that weep" (Rom. xii, 15).

Write on the blackboard:

1. Envy—to repine at our neighbor's good—to be sad when he is in possession of temporal or spiritual blessings—to rejoice when he is deprived of them.
2. Brotherly Love—to wish every one well—to sincerely rejoice and condole with our neighbor.

Synthesis. Whom do you like more: Saul or Jonathan? The heart of the father was filled with envy, the heart of the son was full of love. How does one sin by envy? How is envy distinguished from covetousness? What is brotherly love? Why is envy a capital sin? *(Have the pupils read the answers from the Catechism (or blackboard). Assign the lesson for the next class).*

Application. 1. Do you know whence comes all the unhappiness in the world?—"Through the envy of the devil death hath entered into the world" (Wisdom ii, 24). Do you understand these words? Our first parents were God's children on earth and were some day to be God's children in Heaven. But the devil could not bear that at all; he became furious with envy. Out of envy he deluded these poor men and seduced them and cheated them out of their good fortune.—Tell me some other examples!—Cain murdered his brother out of envy. The brothers of Joseph of Egypt sold him out of envy; they nearly became murderers of their brother. The Pharisees were envious of Jesus. They

said: "All the people are running after Him." They could not bear to see that. Therefore they became murderers of God. Do you now see, what ruin envy can cause? Yes, envy is a true source of poison in the heart of man.

2. But now look into your own heart! Does not envy sometimes arise within your heart? How do envious children act?—One of its brothers or sisters gets a little more; at once the envious child makes a face and begins to quarrel.—A child is praised in school because it has been diligent at work. Immediately another child says: "Oh! I know, you simply want to stand in with the teacher and be more esteemed than the others!" Do you see? There envy is peeping forth!—Here is a good child; but the others cannot bear it. Why? Because that child has wealthy parents and, therefore, gets more beautiful clothes. Poisonous envy is in their hearts.—A lazy pupil is punished. That pleases the others and they say: "It serves him right!" Phew! to be so unkind!—Do you suppose, that such children are fit for Heaven? No, in Heaven there is no envy, there is only love there. Therefore away with envy! For otherwise envy might gradually poison the whole heart. Just think of Saul: How far did not envy drive him! If envy begins to stir within you, because others have more than you, look up to Heaven. Heaven is worth more than all the treasures of earth. If others are esteemed more than you, look up to the Cross: How was not Jesus despised! "I am a worm and no man; the reproach of men and the outcast of the people!" (Ps. xx, 7).

LESSON XII.

Sloth—Diligence.

Catechetical Unit:

1) When do we sin by Sloth?
2) What is Diligence?

Preparation. Dear children, the first and the greatest Commandment is: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with they whole heart, with thy whole soul, with thy whole strength, and with thy whole mind" and the second is like to this: "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." What capital sin is opposed to Brotherly Love?—*(Question the pupils briefly on the preceding lesson).*—Many people think, that they are upon earth simply to eat and to drink and to sleep and to do nothing. No, it is God's will, that we work and not idle away our time. Already an old pagan has said: "As the bird is born to fly, so is man born to work." A Christian must work for his body and for his soul. To be lazy and to do nothing is a sin, a capital sin. Our Divine Saviour warns us earnestly against laziness or *Sloth.* Once He spoke a very instructive parable about the talents. Thereby He wishes to show us, how God punishes Sloth and rewards *Diligence.*—(Do you know what a talent is?—A talent is worth about $1250).

Aim. We can all learn from the parable: *why we ought to work industriously and earnestly overcome Sloth.* That is our task for today.—Now listen to the parable!

Presentation. A rich man made a journey into a foreign country. He called his servants together and committed his goods into their care. To one he gave five talents, to another two, and to a third one talent: to each one according to his ability. And he went away.

He that had received five talents, went and traded with them and gained five more. Likewise he that had received two talents, earned two more. But he that received one talent, went and buried it in the earth.

After a considerable time the master returned and held an accounting with his servants. He that had received five talents approached and brought five more talents and said: "Lord, thou hast committed five talents to my care; see, I have earned five more!" The

master said to him: "Well done! thou good and faithful servant; because thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will place thee over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord!"—Thereupon he also came forward, who had received two talents, and said: "Lord, thou hast given me two talents; behold! I have gained two more!" The lord said to him: "Well done! thou good and faithful servant, because thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will set thee over many things; enter thou into the joy of thy lord!"—At last he, too, came, who had received one talent, and said: "Lord, I know that thou art a hard master, and that thou gatherest where thou hast not sown. Therefore I feared and buried my talent in the earth. See, here thou hast again what is thine!" The lord answered him, saying: "Thou wicked and slothful servant! Thou knewest, that I reap where I sow not, and gather where I have not strewed: thou oughtest therefore to have committed my money to the bankers, and at my coming I should have received my own with usury." Then the lord commanded: "Take ye away therefore the talent from him! And give it to him that hath ten talents. And the unprofitable servant cast ye out into the exterior darkness. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth!"

Explanation. Do you understand the meaning of this parable?—The lord is God, the servants are we children of men, the talents are the graces of God for body and soul. We ought to work with these talents of grace and earn Heaven. That is God's will.

1. Let us now first look at the third of these servants. He received one talent. What ought he to have done with the money? He should have traded with it, bought and sold, and thus have earned like the other servants. That would have been his duty; for the master had so commanded him. For that he would have had time enough too; for the master stayed away a long time. However, he did not want to work. Therefore the servant neglected his duty. He thought and

said to himself: "Why should I tire myself out like that for my master? I do not want to work!" Then he went and buried his talent in the earth. Now he had absolutely nothing more to do, and he lived without cares from day to day. Do you see? This man gave in to his natural repugnance to work and exertion; he shunned work; he preferred to be lazy rather than to do his duty. That is sloth, and sloth is a sin. Jesus said that plainly enough: "Cast him out into exterior darkness!"—**We sin by sloth when we give way to our natural repugnance to labor and exertion, and thus neglect our duties.** *(Repeat together; use the blockboard; see the diagram below just above the synthesis).* Yes, thus does a slothful man act: immediately everything is too much for him. He goes out of the way of work, because he is unwilling to trouble himself. Whatever he must do, that he generally does as badly as possible. He prefers to go after pleasure and takes things as easily as he possibly can. A lazy man does not want to learn; praying generally lasts too long for him. The slothful person always knows excuses, lazy excuses. "Tomorrow, tomorrow, only not today," that is what lazy people say.

2. The slothful servant did not want to work at all. What do you suppose he did the live-long day?—He stood idly about, and stole the day from the dear Lord. But such a day thief easily falls into all sorts of wickedness. That is what God's word says: "Idleness hath taught much evil" (Ecclesiasticus xxxiii, 29). You all know, too, the old proverb says: "Sloth is the devil's pillow." What might that mean?—If a person does nothing, neither will the devil have to do anything. He may remain quietly lying upon his pillow; for the idler will of himself run into Hell. That is true. Just look at that servant! He became disobedient and saucy to his master, and cast bitter reproaches against him. The slothful man does not want to get up in the morning, and neither does he say his morning prayers. On Sundays he misses Mass, be-

cause he cannot get ready. He comes too late to church, because he is not "in a hurry." The slothful man is afraid of work; therefore he easily falls into need. What does he do in his need?—He begins to steal and to lie and to cheat. A lazy man is always lonely. Therefore he goes to the saloons and drinks too much and gambles a great deal and talks much and—sins a great deal. The heart of a slothful man is like a rotten, stinking swamp. There detestable vermin live their ugly life—bad thoughts and detestable desires. Only in *one* thing is the slothful man diligent—in eating. He is the first at the table and the last one away. —Now you all see, that sloth leads to other sins. *It is a capital sin, because it is a main source, whence many other sins take their rise. (Repeat together).*

3. Now let us look at the two other servants. Did they, too, act like that lazy servant?—No, they were filled with zeal. They worked with their talents and earned again as much: the one five talents and the other two talents. They had, of course, to work: work is our duty; God wills it. But for that they also received their reward. What did the lord say?—"Well done! thou good and faithful servant; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord!" Therefore eternal happiness in Heaven—that is the reward.—Just as these faithful servants so every true Christian acts: he works industriously, but not merely for the praise of men, but for God's praise and God's reward. In all that he does, he thinks: God wills it! God is looking at me! Everything for the love of God and for Heaven!—**Diligence is a virtue, which enables us to serve God readily and cheerfully, to promote His honor as much as lies in our power, and faithfully to perform all our duties.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

To be sure, sometimes things become too much and too hard even for a diligent man. But he does not give up; he says to himself: "I must persevere. Heaven is worth it all without a doubt!" The body will some day have time enough to rest in the ceme-

tery; but for that the soul will some day be permitted to rest eternally with God in Heaven. What a happiness! What will God say to the faithful Christian at death?—"Well done! thou good and faithful servant: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord!"

Write on the blackboard:

1. Sloth—to give away to our natural repugnance to labor and exertion—to neglect our duties.
2. Diligence—to serve God readily and cheerfully —to promote God's honor—to faithfully perform all our duties.

Synthesis. We have learned two things from the parable of the talents. From the slothful servant we have learned: how we sin by sloth? From the diligent servants we have learned: who is diligent? What is sloth? Why is sloth a capital sin? What sins come from sloth? What is diligence? *(Have the pupils read the answers from the Catechism (or blackboard). Assign the lesson for the next class).*

Application. Now just think once more of that parable! When the lord returned home, he held an accounting with his servants. To the first and second he said very friendly and kindly: "Thou good and faithful servant!" Then they felt very happy at heart. But to the other servant he said earnestly and severely: "Thou wicked and slothful servant!" How he must have trembled for fear!—Now pay attention! The dear Lord has also committed to each one of you tallents: a healthy body, strength to work, understanding to learn, but particularly the holy Sacraments and prayer. The Lord will come and keep an accounting with you: in the hour of death. What will He then say to you?—If you have been lazy, the Lord will say: "Thou wicked and slothful servant, out with you into the darkness!" What terrible words! But if you have been diligent, He will say: "Well done! thou good and faithful servant: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord!" What happy words! Which do you want? You can

choose. But this I know for certain: If a child is unwilling to work, if it has no pleasure in studying, if the little prayers are at once too much for it, if it hates to go to church, if it prefers most of all to think of eating and drinking and sleeping, it will not have a good ending. That must be changed. Think again of Jesus! How diligently and zealously did not the Good Shepherd work day and night, in order to save all the erring little sheep, the poor sinners! Therefore, children, begin courageously and continue diligently! All for God and thus all for Heaven!

IV.
VIRTUE AND PERFECTION

LESSON I.

The Divine Virtues.

Catechetical Unit:

1) What do we call those graces or gifts by which we believe in Him, and hope in Him, and love Him? L. X. Q. 106.

2) What is Faith? L. X, Q. 107.

3) What is Hope? L. X, Q. 108.

4) What is Charity? L. X, Q. 109.

5) When should we make acts of Faith, Hope and Charity?

(N. B. The supplementary answers in this lesson are taken from *"A Full Catechism of the Catholic Religion"* by Jos. Deharbe, S. J., Revised, Enlarged and Edited by the Rt. Rev. P. N. Lynch, D. D., p. 229).

Preparation. Dear children, the first thing necessary in a Christian's life is: Preserve thy heart from sin and vice! But this is not sufficient; a true Christian ought to do more than that. Just imagine, that a garden is not tended for a long time. What will happen?—In a short while the weeds will thrive in rank abundance and choke all the flowers. Then the gardener comes and tears up everything and turns over the soil. But that is only half the work; for as yet there is wanting every trace of flowery ornament. Now he must plant the garden all over again.—Our heart is like a garden. There of themselves all sorts of weeds thrive and flourish in abundance. First of all we must get rid of the weeds of sin. But God is not yet satisfied with that; we must also plant the flowers of virtue in our hearts. That is what God wills; and then God Himself will dwell in our hearts as in a little kingdom of Heaven. You see, therefore, that *a true Christian should also diligently endeavor to become more and more virtuous, and to attain the perfection suitable to his condition. (Repeat together).*

In Heaven there are many Saints. But just as different as are the stars in the heavens, so do the Saints in Heaven differ from one another. As great as is our holiness and virtue in this life, so great will be our glory in the other life. There are many Christian virtues. Which virtues do you already know? Humility, Liberality, Chastity, Brotherly Love, Temperance, Meekness, Diligence, Obedience, Truthfulness, Piety, etc. The word "virtue" means strength; and in man virtue is the strength of the soul. Strength and courage are necessary for the performance of what is good, because our evil inclinations or passions are continually trying to enslave us and make us commit evil. The greatest and the most excellent of the Christian virtues are these three: *Faith, Hope,* and *Charity.* You have already heard of these virtues. They are commanded by the first Commandment of God. How do we adore God interiorly?—How does a person sin against Faith? Hope? Charity?—Are sins against Faith, Hope and Charity also sins against the first Commandment of God?—What must we do to save our souls?—Let us now make acts of Faith, Hope and Charity together.

Aim. Today we are going to learn more about these three virtues. *What do we call these three virtues? What are they? When should we make acts of Faith, Hope, and Charity?* That is what I intend to show you in today's lesson.

Presentation. A child is brought to Holy Baptism. His name is John. The priest speaks the solemn words of Baptism: "I baptize thee in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." At that moment Heaven opens, the Holy Ghost comes down and purifies and sanctifies that soul in the Blood of Jesus Christ. At the same time He places in that child's heart as a baptismal gift the three Divine virtues: Faith, and Hope, and Charity.

Little John grew bigger and stronger. As soon as

his reason awoke, his pious mother told him about the heavenly Father and the Christ Child, about God's Mother and the Saints, about Jesus' Sufferings and Death. The child listened attentively to its mother and rejoiced; already it began to believe, and to hope, and to love. Then little John went to school. Just as the tender bud gradually opens up and breathes in the golden sunlight, so did that young soul open and take in the great and holy teachings of our religion; and his Faith became stronger, and likewise his Hope, and his Charity. Again the Holy Ghost came, in Holy Confirmation, in order to perfect what He had begun to do in Holy Baptism. Now the boy was endowed with strength from on high.

Soon John had to go out into the hostile life of the world. But soon the dangers of life, too, approached his young heart. He heard words of ridicule against Holy Faith, and sometimes the thought would steal into his soul: "I wonder whether all that I believe is really true?" But at once he would chase away the bold intruder from the sanctuary of his soul, by praying: "O my God! I believe in Thee. Increase my Faith!" At times he would become all discouraged and disconsolate; it seemed as though he heard a voice within himself, saying: "God has abandoned you!" But it lasted only for a few moments; then he would lift up his hands and his heart heavenwards, saying: "O my God! I hope in Thee. Strengthen my Hope!" And when his heart became cold towards God and filled with disgust for prayer and Divine services he remained faithful to God, nevertheless, and prayed devoutly: "O my God! I love Thee. Inflame my Charity!" At the same time he never forgot the words of counsel spoken so often to him by his catechist: "If you wish to live and die well, receive the Holy Sacraments every month." He did it, and each time he received them with a living Faith, a strong Hope, and an ardent Charity.

God had not assigned him a long life. Very early little John was ripe for Heaven. As soon as he

realized, that the danger of death was at hand, at once he made an act of perfect Contrition together with acts of Faith, and Hope, and Charity. Then he sent for the priest, in order to prepare himself for death in a Christian manner. His last dying prayer was: "Jesus, Thou Eternal Truth, I believe in Thee! Jesus, Thou Eternal Joy, I hope in Thee. Jesus, Thou Supreme Good, I love Thee!" "In Thee, O Lord, have I hoped, let me never be confounded!" (Ps. xxx, 2).

Explanation. 1. That was a beautiful Christian death. But it was also a beautiful Christian life. Three heavenly stars do we see shining in this life: Faith, Hope, Charity. Do you know where they come from and what they are called? The gardener plants the seed in the earth in the early spring-time. So too, the heavenly Gardener, the Holy Ghost, has planted the Divine seeds of Faith, and Hope, and Charity in the child's soul. You see, then, that these three gifts or graces come from God Himself. They are called *Divine Virtues.* They help us to believe, and to hope, and to love the Lord God.—**These graces or gifts of God, by which we believe in Him, and hope in Him, and love Him, are called he Divine Virtues of Faith, Hope, and Charity.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard; see the diagram below just above the synthesis).* They are baptismal gifts or presents from the Holy Ghost. St. Paul once wrote these words: "The Charity of God is poured forth in our hearts by the Holy Ghost" (Rom. v, 5). At the moment when the priest pours the baptismal water over our heads, the Holy Ghost pours or infuses the Charity of God into the soul; but not Charity only, but also Faith and Hope. These three are always together with sanctifying grace.

The seed slumbers for a time in the bosom of the earth. But when the warm sunshine comes, the seed awakens and begins to sprout, and a little plant springs up from the earth and grows quickly. So too, these three Divine virtues in the beginning slumber in the

child's soul. But not very long. What do we see in little John?—Very soon the first shoots begin to show themselves. The little fellow listened to his mother as she related the holy teachings of our religion, and under the sunshine of grace he began to believe, and to hope, and to love. What happened after that?—The boy heard the priest explain Christian Doctrine in the school, and out of the little shoots came forth a little plant. His Faith was directed to God, his Hope was directed to God, and his Charity was directed to God. That is the second reason, yes the chief reason, why we call these three virtues "Divine" virtues: because they directly relate or refer to God.—*Faith, Hope, and Charity directly relate to God; therefore they are called Divine Virtues. (Repeat together).*—Obedience, too, is a virtue. But Obedience is directed first to our parents, and then only to God. You obey your parents for God's sake. Temperance, too, is a virtue. But Temperance is directed first to the body, and only then to God. You want to be temperate, because God wills it. So it is with the other virtues: they relate to God only indirectly. But Faith, Hope, and Charity directly relate to God. They are Divine Virtues.

2. Now you can easily understand what these three Divine virtues are. Tell me: why did little John believe all the teachings of our religion?—Not indeed of himself, by his own powers or strength. There are many truths of our holy religion, which John could not understand with his little mind. Yes, even when he grew up, he was not able to fully understand these teachings. His mind was too weak and small: the truths of our holy Faith are too big and mighty. And yet, he never doubted about them; he firmly held them to be true. Why?—Simply and solely because God has spoken them or revealed them and the Church has taught them in God's name. John had Divine Faith. **Faith is a Divine virtue by which we firmly believe the truths which God has revealed.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard)*

Little John kept his mind and heart raised heavenwards every day of his life. What was it, that helped him to turn his thoughts to God and to Heaven?—Of himself, by his own strength, he could not have done this. He was too weak for that. Many a time he was tempted to say: "Oh! what is the use of troubling about the other life? Enjoy yourself now. Who knows after all, whether there is a Heaven or a Hell?" But no; in spite of these temptations he always remembered the reward, that one day was to be his in Heaven and he lovingly trusted in God, knowing that he would be with him always with His holy graces. Did not Jesus promise to help him? You see, then, John did this because he had Divine Hope in his heart.—**Hope is a Divine virtue by which we firmly trust that God will give us eternal life and the means to obtain it.** *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

Then too, little John never grew tired of listening to his good mother speaking of the good God: of God, the Father, Who created and watches over us His dear children; of God, the Son, Who suffered and died for our sins; of God, the Holy Ghost, Who makes our souls pure and holy with heavenly grace. "Oh! how good God has been to me," little John said time and again; "how good God is in Himself! I will never offend Him by sin!" Each day John renewed his good resolution, and his dying prayer was: "Jesus, Thou Supreme Good, inflame my love!" This pious boy also remembered that all men, without exception, are children of God and have been redeemed from sin and Hell by the Precious Blood of Jesus. Therefore John always tried to treat them just as he would like them to treat him. He helped them whenever he could by corporal and spiritual works of mercy. "That is God's will," he used to repeat to himself. Now tell me: do you think that John could do all this of himself, by his own strength? —No indeed; he needed God's special help to do this. And God gave him this strength by the virtue of Charity.—**Charity is a Divine virtue by which we love**

God above all things for His own sake, and our neighbor as ourselves for the love of God. *(Repeat together; use the blackboard).*

3. In the beginning Faith, Hope, and Charity were slumbering in the child's heart, and only gradually did they awaken. But it is possible for the Divine virtues to go to sleep again. Therefore a Christian must wake them up again, or excite them, at the proper time. Our little John did that often. That is right. *We ought to make acts of Faith, Hope, and Charity frequently in life. (Repeat together).* That is a Christian's duty. A person who never does that sins, and can also sin grievously. But when ought we especially to make these acts of the Divine virtues? Let us look at little John.

a) While very young John had to face the world. What dangers did he meet there?—He was frequently obliged to be in the company of unbelievers. No wonder, that oftentimes doubts against Faith awoke in his young heart. How did he act in such temptations?—Every time he made an act of Faith immediately, and prayed as did the Apostles: "Lord, increase my faith!" Repeatedly he feel into bitter trials. How difficult it is, when one no longer knows how to help oneself! Then many a one loses his head and has no trust at all in God and murmurs against God as did the heathens. What did John do in such temptations? He did as a Christian ought to do, and immediately made an act of Christian Hope: "O my God! I trust in Thee. Thou wilt not abandon me!"—Even for good and pious Christians there comes a time, when everything seems to be against them. Then many a man imagines that he no longer has a single spark of the love of God in his heart. However, Charity is only slumbering in his heart. What is to be done?—John, too, was not spared such temptations. But immediately he made an act of Charity again: "My God and my All! I love Thee above all things!" That is what every true Christian does.—*We should make acts of Faith, Hope, and*

Charity especially in great temptations against these virtues. (Repeat together).

b) The young man of our story later on never forgot the words of counsel—I have already told them to you:—"If you wish to live and die well, receive the Holy Sacraments every month!" But, of course, you must do that in a worthy manner. How did John prepare himself for the Holy Sacraments?—He never neglected first to make acts of Faith, Hope, and Charity. That is right.—*We should make acts of Faith, Hope, and Charity especially when we receive the Holy Sacraments. (Repeat together).* How else can one confess well! Just see! Faith tells you: You are a poor sinner; you have deserved God's punishments. Hope tells you: God is merciful; He wants to forgive your sins again. Charity tells you: You need Charity to feel truly sorry for your sins and to do better. How else can a person receive Holy Communion well! Faith tells you: Your Jesus is coming to you. Hope admonishes you to say with all your heart: "O Lord! I am not worthy, that Thou shouldst enter under my roof, but speak the word only and my soul shall be healed!" It is Charity, that brings Jesus to you with His love and graces.

c) Soon the young man of our story had to leave this world. But as our life, so generally, too, our death. What was his first thought when in danger of death?—At once he made an act of perfect Contrition. This sorrow for sin out of perfect Charity of God has indeed a wonderful power and purifies the soul from every sin and can save the soul for Heaven. To this act he added Faith, Hope, and Charity. And what was the last thing he did in his dying hour?—No one can help a dying man any more. Often enough the dying person is also tortured with severe temptations. What ought he to do? God is his only Hope. Therefore he ought to cling fast and firmly to God by Faith, Hope and Charity. Remember that above all else: *We ought to make acts of Faith, Hope and Charity especially*

when we are in danger of losing our life, or on our death-bed. (Repeat together).

Write on the blackboard:

1. Divine Virtues—Faith, Hope, Charity—come directly from God—are directly related to God (help us to believe, hope, love God).

2. Divine Virtues are to be exercised:
   a) in grievous temptations against these virtues;
   b) at the reception of the Sacraments;
   c) in danger of death.

Synthesis. What we have heard today is important for the Christian life. Let us repeat. What does the word "virtue" mean? Which are the most excellent and important of the Christian virtues? What do we call those gifts or graces by which we believe, hope and love God? Why are they called "Divine" virtues? What does St. Paul say of Charity? When ought we to make acts of Faith, Hope, Charity? Say the longer formulas of these three acts. *(Have the pupils read the answers from the Catechism (and blackboard). Assign the lesson for the next class).*

Application. 1. We ought to make acts of the Divine virtues often during life. It is customary to make these acts together every Sunday in the Children's Mass. That is what the Church desires. It is still better, if you do that every morning at your morning prayers. That is a good preparation for your hour of death. Moreover, each time that you make these acts devoutly, you also receive an indulgence of seven years and seven times forty days (or quarantines). That is an alms for your soul; in the hour of death it will serve you in good stead.

2. What would you do, if your father or mother were suddenly to get dangerously ill?—A boy once held the Crucifix to the lips of his dying father, and prayed for him the act of perfect Contrition together with

the acts of Faith, Hope and Charity. He acted well indeed. Remember that! Perhaps you will even be able to save an immortal soul by such conduct.

3. St. Paul says of the Divine virtues: "Now there remain Faith, Hope, and Charity, these three; but the greatest of these is Charity" (I Cor. xiii, 13). To love God eternally: that, of course, is the happiness of Heaven.

LESSON II.

The Eight Beatitudes.

Catechetical Unit:

Which are the Beatitudes? L. XVI, Q. 185.

Preparation. Dear children, to become perfect, that is our vocation. We must labor at that continually. If we do not do it ourselves, Purgatory will do it for us some day. Only after we have become the image and likeness of Christ, can we become Saints in Heaven. Let us review the lesson on Christian Virtue, especially the three Divine Virtues. *(Question the pupils briefly on the preceding lesson).*

Now many of the people of the world imagine, of course: They that live in the convent and the religious can easily become perfect; but we have to live in the world and there no one can become perfect. That is absolutely false: *People in the world can also lead a perfect life, if they do not live according to the spirit of the world, but according to the spirit of Jesus Christ. (Repeat together).* That is perfectly true. In the sermon on the Mount Christ said to all His hearers: "Be ye perfect, as your Father in Heaven is perfect!" But who lives according to the spirit of Christ? He that thinks like Christ, he that loves and wills what Christ loves and wills, he that detests what Christ detests. And who lives according to the spirit

of the world? He that thinks and acts like the children of the world. But the children of the world want only money, want to eat and drink and enjoy themselves. The spirit of the world and the spirit of Christ are like fire and water; they cannot get on with each other.—*The spirit of the world and the spirit of Christ are at variance with each other, as we distinctly see from those sentences of our Saviour, which are called the Eight Beatitudes. (Repeat together).* Where did Christ announce them?—

Aim. Let us consider more closely *the spirit of Christ and the spirit of the world.* We are going to explain the Eight Beatitudes.

Presentation. Our Blessed Lord loved most of all to sojourn in Capharnaum on the lovely Lake of Genesareth. In the neighborhood little hills rise above the surrounding land. Once Jesus seated Himself on one of these little eminences. His disciples came to Him. The people grouped themselves about Him in a large circle. And Jesus opened His mouth and began to speak:

"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of Heaven. Blessed are the meek, for they shall possess the land. Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted. Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after justice, for they shall have their fill. Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy. Blessed are the clean of heart, for they shall see God. Blessed are the peace-makers, for they shall be called the children of God. Blessed are they that suffer for justice sake, for theirs is the kingdom of Heaven. Blessed are you, when they shall revile you and persecute you, and speak all that is evil against you untruly, for My sake; be glad and rejoice, for your reward is very great in Heaven" (Matt. v, 3-12).

Explanation. 1. *Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of Heaven.*—In the beginning Job was rich and happy and esteemed. But he lost all:

his herds, his house, his children, and became very poor. His heart grew sad at that, but he did not murmur against God. He said: "The Lord hath given, the Lord hath taken away: as it hath pleased the Lord so be it done: blessed be the name of the Lord." Do you see? Job bore his poverty patiently and gladly; he was poor in spirit. But there are also poor people, who are very much dissatisfied and filled with envy towards the rich. Such people are not poor in spirit.—God rewarded the great sufferer Job; later on He again made him rich, yes, much richer than he ever was before. But in his wealth, too, Job remained poor in spirit. Why? He did not attach his heart to money and possessions, but rather considered his riches to be a gift of God and gladly gave of it to the poor. You see, then, that rich and poor can be poor in spirit: the poor man, if he is satisfied, and the rich man, if he is merciful.—Christ calls the poor in spirit blessed: "for theirs is the kingdom of Heaven." What does that mean?—The poor in spirit have the peace of God in their souls, and that is already a portion of Heaven. The poor in spirit are walking like Job on the way to Heaven, and Heaven some day will be their unspeakable reward.

2. *Blessed are the meek, for they shall possess the land.*—Job lost not only everything, but was also covered with leprosy from the soles of his feet to the crown of his head. Now he was all miserable and abandoned. His own wife despised and ridiculed him, saying: "Do you still hold fast to your piety? Curse against the Lord and die!" But he answered: "You speak like foolish people. If we have received good things from the hand of the Lord, why should we not accept also evil things?" Likewise his three friends heard of his misfortune and came to comfort him. But they were of this opinion: "You surely must have committed great sins, otherwise this misery would not have come over you!" However, Job protested: "I am entirely innocent!"—How unkind and heartless was not his wife? And yet he was not wrought up over it, but

rather patiently allowed those insults to pass over him. And how the reproaches of his friends must have hurt the soul of that poor sufferer! And yet, he remained quiet and kind under it all. That is meekness. What does Jesus promise to the meek?—"They shall possess the land." Already on earth they have peace in their hearts, because they are masters of themselves. They have peace with others, because no one can be angry with a meek man. They will possess eternal peace in the kingdom of Heaven.

3. *Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted.*—Magdalen was once a great sinner. But she entered into herself. All sorrowful she came to Jesus and wept bitterly over her sins, washed the feet of the Lord with her tears and wiped them with the hairs of her head. Lovingly she kissed His feet and anointed them with precious ointment. Then Jesus spoke the consoling words: "Thy sins are forgiven thee. Go in peace!" From that hour Magdalen was a disciple of Jesus. Sorrowing she stood with the Mother of Sorrows under the Cross. On Easter morning she hastened out to the sepulchre, and wept, and was overjoyed, when she was again permitted to see the Risen Saviour.—That is Christian mourning: to mourn over one's sins, to mourn over the Sufferings of Christ. They who mourn in that way, will be comforted, says Jesus. Just look at Magdalen! When the Saviour said: "Thy sins are forgiven thee; go in peace!" she felt so happy at heart, that she imagined she was already in the kingdom of Heaven. Thus does God comfort those that mourn on earth. But the most beautiful comfort will come in the other life. "God will wipe all tears from their eyes" (Apoc. vii, 17). "They that sow in tears shall reap in joy" (Ps. cxxv, 5).

4. *Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after justice, for they shall have their fill."*—That, too, you see in Magdalen. From a sinner she was made into a great penitent. Jesus spoke to her those great words:

"Thy sins are forgiven thee!" Now she was just in God's sight. But from that moment Magdalen had an ardent desire of becoming ever better and holier, a true hunger and thirst for justice. Therefore she loved to be with Jesus and listened so zealously to His teachings. What was the reward for such conduct? Her soul was filled with grace, but likewise with blessed peace. But over there in the other life she will be permitted to share in the heavenly wedding feast. There she will be allowed to enjoy the vision of God. That is such an unspeakable joy, that the soul can never tire of seeing. Do you now understand the fourth Beatitude? Jesus means: They that hunger and thirst after justice and holiness, will be filled with grace now, and some day they will receive their fill of glory.

5. *Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.*—Just think of Tobias! Even among the heathens he walked faithfully according to God's Commandments and did good to his countrymen, wherever he could. Daily he went amongst them and comforted them and gave alms freely from his possessions. He fed the hungry, and gave drink to the thirsty, and clothed the naked. If an Israelite was murdered, Tobias would take the corpse, hide it in his house and bury it in the night-time. His heart was filled with love and mercy.—What does Jesus promise to the merciful?—Tobias became blind. That was a hard trial. But God restored to him his eye-sight again. Do you see? Already upon this earth God is merciful to those that are merciful. But especially at the judgment is God merciful. Then Christ will say: "What thou hast done to My brethren, thou has done to Me." "A merciful man doth good to his own soul" (Prov. xi, 17). A merciful man is like an ant: it gathers provisions for the winter, the merciful man collects a supply for life eternal. A merciful man acts like a sower of seed: he casts the seed about and gathers a harvest thirty, fifty, and a hundred fold in eternity.

6. *Blessed are the clean of heart, for they shall see God.*—St. Catherine was the daughter of a king, and as beautiful as she was pure of heart. She was accused of being a Christian and brought before the Emperor. Fifty wise men were to hold a disputation with her about religion and to show her, that the Christian Faith was only foolishness. However, Catherine spoke so beautifully and wonderfully against foolish idolatry and for the Christian Faith, that all acknowledged: "We are defeated; we cannot refute this virgin!" The Emperor was all wrought up over that and pronounced the death sentence.—Catherine was only eighteen years old. How then could she be so wise and speak in such a wonderful manner? Her heart was pure and innocent. Her very name tells us that; for Catherine means "the pure one." But a pure heart is like a clear spring. Just as the sun is reflected in it, so are the Christian truths reflected in a pure soul. They that have a clean heart understand the things of religion much better, and so even now they are permitted to see God; but some day they will see God face to face.

7. *Blessed are the peace-makers, for they shall be called the children of God*—Between the shepherds of Abraham and Lot there was quarreling over the pastures. That hurt Abraham very much. He said to Lot: "My dear, do not allow a quarrel to arise between thee and me, between thy shepherds and my shepherds; for we are brothers. See, the whole land is open to thee. I pray thee rather depart from me! If thou goest to the left I will remain to the right; if thou goest to the right, I will remain to the left."—Do you see? Abraham was a peace-maker; he was unwilling to quarrel for any price; he preferred to give in. That is what God wants: We ought to live in peace and charity with one another. "Peace on earth to men!" But why does Christ call the peace-makers the children of God?—The peace-makers are even now God's children, because they are like to God. St. Paul says: "God is a God of peace" (II Thess. iii, 16). In

Heaven some day they will become real children of God; and there is eternal peace.

8. *Blessed are they that suffer persecution for justice sake, for theirs is the kingdom of Heaven.*—Think of the story of St. Paul! How the Pharisees hated him! Nowhere did they permit him to have peace, but rather they hounded and persecuted him like a wild animal. And why? For Christ's sake, for the sake of justice. One might imagine, that life would have become a burden to him. But no. Paul said: "I exceedingly abound with joy, in all our tribulations" (II Cor. vii, 4). But how could he rejoice? "Blessed are they that suffer persecution for justice' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of Heaven." This promise of Christ was his comfort in tribulation, his joy in the midst of suffering. They who suffer with Christ now, will some day rejoice with Christ.

Synthesis. Let us gather briefly together what we have learned today. Can one also in the world lead a perfect life? Does the spirit of the world contradict the spirit of Christ? On what occasion did Christ announce the Eight Beatitudes? Which are the Eight Beatitudes?*(Have the pupils read the answers from the Catechism. Assign the lesson for the next class).*

Application. We know the Beatitudes of Christ. The world, too, has its Beatitudes; but they sound entirely different. Let us compare them with one another. 1. Christ says: "Blessed are the poor in spirit." The world says: "Blessed are the rich; for they have the kingdom of Heaven on earth." 2. Christ says: "Blessed are the meek." The world says: "Do not put up with that! As you treat me, so I will treat you." 3. Christ says: "Blessed are they that mourn." The world says: "Blessed are they that know nothing of trouble and worry." 4. Christ says: "Blessed are they that hunger and thirst for justice." The world says: "Be careful not to exaggerate! One cannot live from praying and going to church." 5. Christ says:

"Blessed are the merciful." The world says: "Let every one take care of himself! For every one is his own neighbor." 6. Christ says: "Blessed are the clean of heart." The world says: "Oh! sins are only human weaknesses; in the end we will get to Heaven." 7. Christ says: "Blessed are the peace-makers." The world says: "Be sure not to give in to others! I must have my rights!" 8. Christ says: "Blessed are they that suffer persecution for justice' sake." The world says: "Blessed are they that have nothing to suffer."

Just examine your conscience: Are you with Christ or with the world? Are you children of God or children of the world? Look further ahead and be wise in a Christian sense! St. Paul says: "The wisdom of this world is folly with God" (I Cor. iii, 19). And Christ says: "Heaven and earth will pass away, but My Words shall never pass away!"

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